



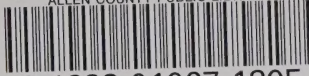


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THE HISTORY OF  
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BY

MARTHA R. McPARTLAND

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In Memory of  
My Mother

# ERRATA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	
71	19	Read 1779 instead of 1778.
97	14	Read St. Louis Exposition in 1904 instead of Jamestown Exposition in 1907.
101	3	Read Margaret Greene instead of Barbara Wickes
101	18	Read "about 1803 by Martin Nichols" instead of "in 1818 by Jeremiah Gardiner."
116	26	Read Peirce and Montrose Streets instead of Peirce and Melrose Streets.
145	36	Read 1858 instead of 1848.
168	23	Read 1750 instead of 1780.
265	15	Read Francis, b. 1715, d. 1715; delete married 1) Sarah Phillips, 2) Martha Levalley.
265	17	Read Francis, b. 1721, married 1) Sarah Phillips 2) Martha Le Valley.
289	25	Read Antoinetta Downing instead of Antoinette Downey.
294	10	Read 220, 285, 287 instead of 220, 283, 288
296	17	Read 168 (ill.73) instead of 78 (ill.73)
297	16	Read 279
297	20	Read 106



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## *Preface*

It has been said that the writer of a regional history should be a newcomer to the area; the theory is based on the assumption that if you are too close to an object you cannot see it clearly. Thus this history will, no doubt, be a prejudiced one, for the town of East Greenwich is very close to me and the writing of this book has truly been a labor of love.

In the past seven years, two hundred and eighty years of history have come alive for me; men and women who settled in East Greenwich, Revolutionary soldiers, doctors and clergymen, shopkeepers, craftsmen and immigrants, have paraded before me, nodding and smiling their approval as I resurrect each historical tidbit and frowning as I make my inevitable errors. There have been many people, both good and bad, living in town these many years. It is impossible to bring them all to the fore; if I have omitted a mention of your favorite ancestor, it is through lack of space and certainly not an intentional slight.

Without the help of others, this book could never have been written. I would like to acknowledge my debt to the following: to Miss Caroline T. Lincoln, who started me off and encouraged me to continue this project; to the late Mrs. Dana Lawrence, a veritable gold-mine of information on local history and genealogy, who patiently and generously gave of her knowledge; to Dr. Alonzo Quinn, of Brown University, who kindly set me straight on the geology of the town; to Colonel H. V. Allen, who lent me manuscripts and data from his own historical collection and that of the Varnum Museum; to Mrs. Chester Rice and Mrs. J. Gifford Tibbitts, who assisted with the gathering of genealogical material; to my neice, Mrs. James E. Masterson, and to Mr. Paul E. Moyer, who so gra-

ciously edited this book; to the staff of the Rhode Island Historical Society for their research assistance; to Mr. S. Jerome Hoxie, whose sketches and maps add so much to this volume; to Mr. David A. Jonah, president of the East Greenwich Free Library Association, for his interest and advice, and to all the members of the Board of Trustees, whose encouragement and support has made this book possible; to Mrs. Milton MacDonald, who lent me valuable letters and genealogical material; to Miss Helen Anderson, Town Clerk, whose well-kept records and personal cooperation were invaluable; to Miss Rose Koralewsky, who so willingly allowed me to use one of her poems; to the innumerable kind people of East Greenwich and surrounding areas, who have given me the benefit of their particular knowledge of local history; and, last but not least, my own family and friends must be acknowledged for their forbearance in listening to my enthusiasm bubble over at frequent intervals. To all of these, and to all who encouraged me in this work—my sincere thanks!

I have endeavored to present this history as clearly as possible. It is chronologically arranged to the end of the Revolutionary War. After that period it is arranged chronologically under topic.

M. R. M.





THE CLEMENT WEAVER HOUSE — 1679

## CHAPTER I

### *An Introduction to East Greenwich*

Typical of hundreds of New England towns in many ways, East Greenwich nonetheless has a distinction and an individuality all its own. Ideally located, compactly planned, culturally alert and historically wealthy, East Greenwich can hold up its head with a good deal of civic pride.

The town faces Narragansett Bay and has the beauty and appeal of a seaport setting. Green hills, blue water, stately trees and old houses combine to produce a uniquely charming atmosphere. Four hills roll up from the sea. On the first rise is the Main Street and business center. The second hill crests on Peirce Street, where there are two churches, the town library, the site of the old East Greenwich Academy, as well as lovely colonial homes. The last hills are in the residential section and level off into the Frenchtown area in the west.

Geographically, East Greenwich is located in the very center of the state of Rhode Island, fifteen miles south of the

state capitol in Providence. It is the eighth oldest town in the state, founded in 1677, and has an area of about sixteen square miles. As the crow flies, it is seven miles from the shore of Greenwich Bay to the West Greenwich line. The southwestern boundary is the Exeter town line; the southern boundary is at Potowomut and at the town line of North Kingstown; the northern boundary is the city line of Warwick. With the exception of the western boundary, which changed with the establishment of the town of West Greenwich in 1741, the town boundaries have changed little in the past two hundred and eighty years.

Geologically, the town is located at the west margin of the Narragansett Basin, the Post Road being very nearly along this margin. The Basin covers a large area of lowland in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. It was formed in the Pennsylvania Age and was once all land, but is now what geologists term a "drowned valley". This means that at one time the area stood high and dry. Later, the valley floor was flooded by the ocean, leaving islands like Aquidneck, Prudence and Patience, popping up out of the water.

The rocks east of the Post Road within the Basin are almost entirely sedimentary and are, for the most part, sandstone, conglomerate, shale and, more rarely, coal and graphite. Volcanic and granite rocks are found west of the Post Road. They are of an earlier period than the Pennsylvania Age, probably the Mississippian Age 270 million years ago. Geologists use the term "East Greenwich Granite Group" in speaking of Mascachaug granite, Cowesett granite, the Spencer Hill volcanics and other varieties of granite.

The most valuable geological assets in East Greenwich are ground water, gravel and sand. Wells for household use were dug in gravel, sand or bedrock. Seven out of eight wells produced at least three gallons a minute, which was adequate for an average household. The primary source of water in this area is from two large wells, one on each side of Hunts River. The supply there is more than ample for town needs.

The gravel, sand and hardpan are the debris left by the great Ice Sheet that covered the whole of New England, then melted away twelve to twenty thousand years ago. The rock ledge running through town near Spring Street is another of our souvenirs of the Ice Age. The shore line has changed greatly with the years. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, erosion was eating so deeply into the shore that the town fathers were worried to the point of requesting men to build wharves to keep the line firm, granting them tax exemption and other favors.

East Greenwich, like the rest of this state, was originally owned by the Indians who lived here. The Indian lands were purchased by English settlers directly from the chief sachem, who signed, with his mark, the deeds transferring the lands. Roger Williams believed this the only legal way to acquire property and it was from the sachem Canonicus that he received the title to his lands. Lands were also acquired by King's Charter, such as that granted to Roger Williams in 1644, which confirmed deeds already signed by the sachems. Pessacus, brother of Miantinomi, was the sachem who signed the submission of his people and lands in the Narragansett Country to Charles II in 1644. Pessacus represented this area of the Narragansett tribe in the councils of the chief sachem, Canonicus. Thus East Greenwich was originally the property of the Narragansett Indians. By the King's Commission in 1665 it was acquired, with the rest of the Narragansett Country as part of the Colony of Rhode Island.

In 1674, the Narragansetts were ruled by Chief Sachem Canonchet. Roger Williams had been in this area since 1636, and had found the Indians interesting, cooperative and friendly. He and Richard Smith had a trading post near Wickford at Cocomuscussoc, where Indians and settlers alike came to barter. The Pequot Path was the main trail which the Indians traveled. It started in Moshassuck (now Providence), ran southwest to Pequot country along the west shore (Pawtuxet), through Apponaug, East Greenwich and across the western end of Potowomut. It crossed the Mascachaug River near where the Greenwich Bleachery is now and there was an In-



dian village near that spot. The path continued past the Elizabeth Spring, by Devil's Foot and over the Tower Hill Road, southward on the west side of Pettaquamscut to Wakefield. It then crossed the Saugatuck River and continued southwesterly until it reached the Pawcatuck River. The path was the basis for our present Post Road, and was variously known later as the Queen's Highway and the King's Highway. Roger Williams, in his "Key to the Indian Language" says: "It is admirable to see what paths their naked hardened feet have made in the wilderness in the most stony and rockie places."

From 1675 to 1677 the Narragansetts, with the Wampanoags, Nipmucs, Abernakis and other New England tribes waged King Philip's War against the settlers. It was not until their leader, King Philip, was killed at Mount Hope in Bristol that the war came to an end. On this side of the bay the only building left standing between Cocumscussoc and the Pawtuxet River was Essex Mill, just over the North Kingstown line. The Indians did not burn this grist mill but utilized it themselves. After the Great Swamp Fight in 1675 there was not one Indian sachem left alive in the Narragansett tribe. When the war was over, Indian captives were herded into stockades at the Wickford trading post and sold as slaves. Those who escaped joined other New England tribes and still others were sold into slavery in the West Indies. Lands, titles and jurisdiction of the Indians became the property of the Colony of Rhode Island.

Incorporated as a town at the end of King Philip's War in 1677, East Greenwich was named for East Greenwich. County of Kent in England. Natives pronounce the name as it were spelled East "Grinedge". Lambard, in his book "Perambulations of Kent", published in London in 1656, says: "Greenwiche, in Latine Verdis Sinus—that is to say the Greene Town". The name of East Greenwich, Rhode Island, was changed to Dedford in 1688. Previous to that date, Charles II of England had a scheme of complete colonial independence for all the New England colonies. He planned to create a royal province under the jurisdiction of Colonel

Percy Kirk. Before the plan could be realized, Charles died in 1685 and his brother, James II, ascended to the throne. His plans for New England were less drastic and certainly more gradual. In 1686 he appointed a native New Englander, Joseph Dudley of Massachusetts, as president of the King's Council. In June of that year the council held session at Kingston, Rhode Island, where they provided for two annual courts of pleas and changed the name of Kingston to Rochester, of Westerly to Haversham and of East Greenwich to Dedford. All three, in due time, reverted to the old names and Dedford became East Greenwich again in 1689.

In 1708 the total population of the town was 240; by 1730 it had risen to 1223. The rise from then was slow but steady and in 1774 the population was composed of 1543 whites, 31 Indians and 69 Negroes. The official census of 1790 credits the town with 1824 inhabitants. The early part of the nineteenth century showed little change in population figures, but between 1840 and 1850 the number jumped from 1509 to 2358, showing the beginning of the influx of European immigrants. By 1890, the figure was 3127 and has risen steadily since. In 1940 the official count was 3842. The floating population today is greater than it has ever been. With the advent of the establishment of the Naval Air Station at Quonset Point in 1941, the transient population helped swell the total to 4896 in 1950. The official census of 1960 sets the population of East Greenwich at 6095, an increase of over a thousand in the last ten years.



THE MILLER-CONGDON HOUSE — 1711 (?)

## CHAPTER II    📖   📖   📖   📖

### *The Founding of East Greenwich*

The end of King Philip's War in 1676 marked the beginning of the formation of the town of East Greenwich. On October 27, 1676, the Rhode Island General Assembly met and assumed jurisdiction over the lands of the Narragansett sachems. Although it was only forty years since the arrival of the first white settlers in this area, these Narragansett Indians, as a tribe, were practically extinct. Those who were not killed in the Indian wars were taken as slaves.

The greediness of Connecticut led its officials to lay claim to the lands around the Narragansett country as far north as Cowesett. On the north glowered the colony of Massachusetts which, in its hatred of Roger Williams, whom it had banished because of his religious beliefs, claimed that the rest of Rhode Island belonged to it. Connecticut based its claim on Indian deeds. But Roger Williams had been granted a generous and forceful charter by Charles II and, at the meeting of the General Assembly in May of 1676 at Newport, Thomas



Gould, James Reynolds and Henry Tibbetts presented a petition asking for "instructions, assistance and advise as to the oppression they suffered under the Colony of Connecticut." The Assembly emphatically agreed with the petitioners and declared:

"If any member of this Colony, or members thereof, shall be at any time molested, or disquieted by any pretense from any other Colony, as to the patent right or jurisdiction of the said lands, that this authority will forthwith make their application to his sacred Majesty. And further this Assembly does hereby strictly prohibit and forbid any person or persons upon any pretense whatever, to settle on, or enter into, the Narragansett country, or King's Province except such as shall make their address unto the General Court of this Colony for their approbation, and shall accordingly comply with such laws and orders as shall from time to time be enacted by the said Court for the good and peaceable government of these parts."

At the next meeting of the Assembly on October 31, 1677, they resolved to lay out a tract of land in the Narragansett country and, according to Colonial Records, to be allotted thusly:

"Ordered that a certain tract of land in some convenient place in the Narragansett country, shall be laid forth into one hundred shares, with house lots, for the accommodation of so many of the inhabitants of this Colony as stand in need of land, and the General Assembly shall judge fit to be supplied.

In pursuance of said act of the General Assembly, this present court do enact and declare that the said tract of land be forthwith laid forth to contain five thousand acres, which shall be divided as follows: Five hundred acres to be laid in some place near the sea, as commodious as may be for a town, which said five hundred acres shall be divided into fifty house lots, the remainder of said five thousand acres, being four thousand five hundred acres, shall be divided into fifty equal shares of great divisions, and that each person hereafter named and admitted by this Assembly, to land in the said tract, shall have and enjoy to him and his heirs and their assigns forever, in manner and form and under the conditions hereafter expressed, one of said

house lots, and one great division, containing in the whole one hundred acres.

And further this Assembly do enact, order and declare, for the services rendered during King Philip's War, the persons here named that is to say: John Spencer, Thomas Nichols, Clement Weaver, Clement Weaver, Jr., Henry Brightman, George Vaughn, John Weaver, Charles Macarty, Thomas Wood, Thomas Frye, Benjamin Griffin, Daniel Vaughn, Thomas Dungen, John Pearce, the Mason, Stephen Peckham, John Crandal, Henry Lilly, Thomas Martin, John Albro, Jr., Samuel Albro, Philip Long, Richard Knight, John Peckham, Thomas Peckham, William Clark, Edward Lay, Edward Richmond, Edmond Calverly, John Heath, Robert Havens, John Strainge, Jr., John Parker, George Browne, Richard Barnes, Samson Battee, John Remington, Jonathan Davol, Benjamin Mowry, Joseph Mowry, William Wilbore, Jr., Giles Pearce, James Battey, Benjamin Gorton, Henry Dyre, John Knowles, Stephen Arnold, Jr., William Hawkins, John Sanford, John Gorton and John Holden, are the persons unto whom the said tract of land is granted, and who shall possess the same, their heirs and assigns according to the true intent and meaning of this present grant.

And to the end, that the said persons, and their successors, the proprietors of the said land, from time to time may be in the better capacity to manage their public affairs, this Assembly do enact and declare that the said plantation shall be a town, by the name and title of East Greenwich, in his Majesty's Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, with all the rights, liberties, and privileges whatsoever, unto a town appertaining; and that the said persons above mentioned, unto whom the said grant is made are by this present Assembly and the authority thereof, made and admitted the freemen of said town, and they, and so many of them as shall be then present, not being fewer than twelve on the said land, required and empowered to meet together upon the second Wednesday next, and constitute a town meeting, by electing a Moderator and a Town Clerk, with such Constables as to them requisite; and also to choose two persons their Deputies to sit in General Assembly, and two persons, one to serve on the Grand Jury, and one of the Jury of Trials in the General Court of Trials, and so the like number and for the said Court.

And to this end that the said Plantation may be speedily settled and improved according to the end of this present in the granting thereof; be it enacted and ordained that each person mentioned in this present grant, shall, within one year after the publication thereof, make on his house lot, by building a house fit and suitable for habitation; and in case any person who hath any of the said house lots shall neglect or refuse, by himself or assignee to build accordingly, he shall forfeit both the house lots and greater division, to be disposed of by any succeeding Assembly as they shall see cause.

And further, this Assembly do enact and declare, that if any person unto whom the said land is granted, by this present act, shall, at any time within one and twenty years after this hereof, sell, grant, make over, or otherwise dispose of any land or lands hereby granted unto him, or unto any other person or persons interested in the said plantation, that then the said person or persons whatsoever, without liberty had been obtained from the General Assembly, that then the said person or persons so selling or disposing of the said land shall lose all other lands whatever, that he is possessed of in the said plantation, and also the lands so disposed of, to be and remain to this Colony.

And further, it is enacted by this Assembly, that the freemen of said town shall make, and lay out convenient highways from the bay up into the country throughout the whole township, as shall be convenient for the settlement of the country above and about the said township."

Claims and counter-claims conflicted with the work of settlement. In January, 1672, a tract of land had been purchased from the Indians by John Fones, John Greene, Thomas Waterman, John Andrew, Henry Tibbitts and John Briggs. The land was later to be labeled "The Fones Purchase". The tract was a large one extending along upper Division Street at the Warwick line almost to the West Greenwich line of today. Then the land extended south to Exeter, ran eastward to Devil's Foot Rock, north to Hunt's River, up to the beginning of Potowomut Neck and thence back to the Warwick line. This area included a large portion of what was designated by the General Assembly in 1677 as the township of East Greenwich. Naturally, Fones and his partners resented



the move by the Assembly and complained bitterly to that body. Why the Fones group was allowed to present a claim when the Assembly had forbidden the sale of land by the Indians as early as 1658, is a moot question.

In 1678 the Assembly decided that East Greenwich should be laid out as a town first and that the Fones contingent could have what was left—which was very little. Later adjustments were made with the group but most of the original Fones Purchase became part of the town of East Greenwich. When the first plat was drawn up in 1716, the names of Fones, Greene, Tibbitts and Andrews appeared, which indicated that the group and the General Assembly did indeed come to a “lovinge agreement”. The first division meted out by the Assembly in 1677 was for 5,000 acres; the second division in 1678 was 10,000 acres; and the third division in 1709 was 35,000 acres. Practically all of the third division became the town of West Greenwich in 1741.

The men who were granted this territory had, in some manner, aided the cause of the Colony in King Philip's War. They had either fought or had given shelter and their worldly goods to troops or to individual soldiers in need. They varied in age, in station and in occupation. Among these men were solicitors, hatters, shoemakers, stone masons, carpenters and farmers. For the most part, they were not wealthy nor were they highly educated. They came of English, Irish and Welsh stock and were chiefly of the Baptist faith. A few had some formal education, like John Spencer, John Heath, Edward Richmond, Edmund Calverly and Thomas Dungen, who left records in their handwriting to prove their ability.

It is certain that many of the original grantees had comfortable homes in Newport, Portsmouth or Jamestown and did not desire to make a new start here. Only one quarter of them actually established themselves here and stayed to become permanent residents of the town. So such names as Sanford, Albrow, Clark, Lilly, Crandall and Havens, are not Greenwich names but Newport, Portsmouth and Jamestown names.

It is most probable that some of these men, who possessed qualities of leadership came to East Greenwich only long enough to be a part of the group to organize the town. Many of them evidently had in mind the welfare of the next generation, as they subsequently deeded their grants to other, and often younger, members of their respective families. So did East Greenwich come into being: a living, breathing, young town, established by men of Old England, now calling themselves New Englanders.



THE BRICK HOUSE — 1767

## CHAPTER III

### *Those Who Staid and Went Not Away*

The phrase used by the General Assembly in granting land to the men at the time of the founding of the town is most appropriate for the small group who “staid and went not away” either at the time of King Philip’s War or when they came here to settle. The early years were exceedingly difficult ones and the temptation to return to the security of the towns they had left must have been great. There were homes to build, land to clear, families to feed and clothe, the old worry of hard winters, sickness and many other fears to face. These men must have been sturdy souls, with the brawn to hew out an existence here and with the brains to establish and run a town.



Of some of these men we know very little, of others, a bit more. But we do know that only thirteen of the original grantees actually settled in Greenwich. The others either died and left the land to their heirs, deeding it to other members of the family or, with the permission of the General Assembly, sold or transferred their right of ownership.

To give an idea of the background, occupations and families of these men, there follows a short sketch and a few known facts about each:

JOHN SPENCER — b. ? — d. 1684

Probably the best known, and certainly the most prolific family man of the original grantees was John Spencer. He evidently came here directly from Newport, where he had been made a freeman in 1668. His wife was Susannah Griffin. John may have been the son of Michael Spencer who was living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1634 and later in Lynn.

Among John's possessions was a Spencer coat-of-arms which indicated that he descended from Sir Robert Spencer of Northampton, England. Also in his inventory was a gentleman's small sword or "tucke", suggesting that he might have held rank in England. The inventory also listed five Indian servants, presumably captives after King Philip's War. There is not much doubt that John Spencer was a leader. He was the first to sign the original grant, was the first town clerk in East Greenwich (1677-1683), and was conservator of the peace in 1678. Early town meetings were held at his home. Much credit is due this man for the early town records which he kept, even though his handwriting is like hieroglyphics to the untrained reader.

John Spencer's original ninety acre farm granted to him in 1677 was on Kenyon Avenue. He evidently bought up other grants in this vicinity because his land-holdings in the area were very extensive. His home stood on the ninety acre section assigned to him near Payne's Pond. The house, which stood on the site of the one owned by James McMahon today, was torn down in 1914. Tradition has it that Peleg,<sup>2\*</sup> son of

*\* Use of small numeral indicates generation of family.*

John<sup>1</sup> Spencer, built it about 1708, but it is most likely that John<sup>1</sup> Spencer had a home, perhaps a small one resembling the original Clement Weaver house, on that site. Peleg may have added lean-tos and ells to the house, bringing it to much larger proportions. Pictures of the house show it to have been a sturdy two-story home with a large center chimney, almost identical with the pilastered chimney on the Joshua Coggeshall house, built in 1705, on Pierce Road. The fact that Peleg Spencer married Elizabeth, daughter of Joshua Coggeshall in 1708, makes it feasible that the same workmen built both these houses.

The last member of the Spencer family to live in the old house was Judith Spencer Payne (1809-1893). Her heirs sold the property to James P. Riley in 1911. He had the house razed in 1914, and so went another fine architectural gem.

Family letters and land evidence bear out the fact that John and Susannah (Griffin) Spencer were buried just west of the house and that someone plowed up the area, not realizing that it was a burial place. So old John and his Susannah lie in unmarked graves on the bank of Payne's Pond.

It was on the north bank of the pond that Jeremiah<sup>3</sup> Spencer, son of Peleg,<sup>2</sup> had a grist mill. In records of the period he is called "Jeremiah Spencer, the miller of Paradise Mill". Many of us today remember when this area was known as Paradise.

John and Susannah Spencer had nine children, eight boys and one girl. Every child married, giving the old folks seventy-six grandchildren, so it is no wonder that the name of Spencer is familiar here after almost three hundred years. There are many Spencer families still living in and around East Greenwich who can trace their ancestry back to the first John Spencer.

THOMAS NICHOLS — b. ? — d. 1708

Thomas Nichols was a native of Wales, who came to Newport via the Barbadoes in 1660. He was made a freeman in Newport in 1664. In 1642 he married Hannah Griffin and

they had nine children, six boys and three girls. Old Thomas and Hannah had forty-six grandchildren, eighteen of them to carry on the Nichols name. Many descendants still live in Rhode Island and direct descendants, Parker B. Nichols, Mary Nichols Rice and A. Reginald Nichols live in this vicinity.

The Nichols farm grant was on the west side of Middle Road at the intersection of Pierce Road, which is to this day called Nichols Corner. Thomas Nichols died here in 1708, leaving or deeding most of his land to his sons, John, Benjamin, and Thomas.

GEORGE VAUGHN — b. 1650 — d. 1704

DANIEL VAUGHN — b. 1653 — d. 1715

The brothers Vaughn were sons of John and Gillian Vaughn and were born in Newport. Daniel married Susannah, daughter of Samuel and Ann Grimes. He probably never established residence here, because in 1686 he exchanged his land in East Greenwich for land in Newport with his brother, George.

George Vaughn did come and live here. He married Margaret, daughter of Robert and Alice Spink, and they had four sons and two daughters. George's farm grant was on Middle Road, just west of the Alvin Briggs place and this property stayed in the Vaughn family until 1806. Daniel Vaughn's grant was where the Hager property is now.

The Vaughn name is still common hereabout. Miss Bertha Vaughn and Mrs. Edith Vaughn Browning are the seventh generation in descent from our early settler, George. Miss Helen Vaughn and Mrs. Ruth Vaughn Cruden of East Greenwich represent the eighth generation from the same ancestor. There are many other Vaughns in the North Kingstown and Warwick areas who can trace their ancestry back to George and Daniel Vaughn.

CLEMENT WEAVER — b. ? — d. 1691

Another man to come to East Greenwich with the original grantees was Clement Weaver, son of Clement and Mary



(Freeborn) Weaver. He was married to Rachel Andrew in September, 1677, and they had seven children. It is rather surprising that there is not a Weaver family left in town, as there were so many of them here at one time. They were active in town affairs and several generations of the family ran the White Horse Tavern on Division Street.

Of all the farmhouses built at this early period, Clement Weaver's is the only one, built before 1700, still standing. It is on Howland Road, the property of Richard Waterhouse III. Built in 1679 on Clement Weaver's land grant, it is the oldest house in East Greenwich. It has been meticulously restored around the original one room with loft above, which it was in the beginning.

JOHN WEAVER — b. ? — d. ?

A brother of Clement Weaver, John, too, was an original grantee. Little else is known of him, except that in 1685 his wife, Catherine, was on the all-woman jury in East Greenwich in the trial of an unwed mother.

PHILIP LONG — b. ? — d. 1726

Also a resident of Newport, where he was made a freeman in 1678, Philip Long had ninety acres of his land in East Greenwich laid out in 1680. In 1682, he exchanged land with Daniel Vaughn and in 1689, deeded to son, Philip "for love—all my ninety acre farm in East Greenwich, only reserving profits of half of said farm for self and wife Hannah that now is." This farm was located on Frenchtown Road.

RICHARD KNIGHT — b. ? — d. 1680

Richard Knight came here from Newport. He was married to Sarah Rogers in 1648. A carpenter by trade he also served as Keeper of the Prison in Newport from 1648 to 1649. He was General Sergeant from 1648 to 1658 and was made a freeman in 1655.

Although Richard Knight never lived on his land in East Greenwich which he received in 1677, his widow, Sarah, peti-

tioned the General Assembly in 1680 for confirmation of a share of the lands settled by her deceased husband in East Greenwich. She was ordered to be possessed of that share upon the same terms as other East Greenwich inhabitants when she agreed to pay forty shillings to the General Assembly within six months.

In 1685, Sarah Knight, with other matrons, served on a jury in the case of a young, unmarried woman with child. Later that year Mrs. Knight died, deeding her one hundred acres to her son, John Knight. In 1688, this land was sold to Gideon Freeborn of Portsmouth. At that time there was a house on the land and the whole parcel was sold for forty pounds. In 1709, Gideon Freeborn deeded his house and land to his two daughters, Mary, wife of Thomas Brayton and Mercy, wife of Thomas Coggeshall of Newport. The house and land deeded to the Braytons is now the property of Raymond Crothers and a Brayton family burial ground is on the property.

#### JOHN HEATH — b. ? — d. 1712

John Heath came to East Greenwich from Portsmouth and was made a freeman in Newport in 1673. He filled various offices here in town, serving as deputy, overseer of the poor and as the second town clerk, succeeding John Spencer. He deeded his house and ten acres of land in East Greenwich to one John Rutenberg (or Rutledge) of Warwick, on condition that he take care of him for the rest of his life. John Heath at the time he made his will was a widower. His wife, Elizabeth died in 1711. They had no family.

#### CHARLES MACARTY — b. ? — d. 1682

An original grantee, this man has the distinction of filing the first will in the town records of East Greenwich. All that is known of him is contained in the will, which is dated 1682 and reads exactly as follows:

"Unto all christian people unto whome these pents may com know yee that I Charles Macarte now of the towne of Est gren-

wich in the Colony of Rhod Island and providence planteons  
Being in perfect memory but weake in body doe meake this my  
lastt will and testament

First That all my deapts bee paid

Se'dly I make John Spenser Junior my Lawfull Haire unto  
whome I Give my house and Land or Lands in this Towne after  
my desese and doe mack John Spenser senior father to the afore-  
said Spenser Gardian to his sonn to teak cere that my will bee  
performed\*\*\*\*\*

Th'ly I Give unto Pasco Whitford the deapt that hee doth  
owe mee, and halfe the Sheepe of mine in his Keeping, and the  
other half to Edward Cartar and to the aforesaid Cartar I give  
my armes, that is tow Guns and a sord and my chest with the  
lock and cea, and also I Give unto Charles Heseltun Junior a  
young horse that will be two yere ould next Spring Branded with  
I S on the shoulder and my biggest yron poot I Give unto John  
Andrew and fower narrow axes \*\*\*\* and my puter I Give to  
young Susanna Spenser to be delivered unto her when she is of  
Edge, and all my carpenter towles and joyners towles I give unto  
William Spenser; which shall be resarved for hime until hee is  
capable unto make youse of them, or of Edge.

My Beding and wooling close I Give to Susanna Spenser senior;  
xcept one peace of brod cloth that I had to make mee a wascoot  
I give unto my haire; and allso I give unto Hanah Long the  
young one heffer of three yere ould to be delivered her at de-  
sese \*\*\*\* and I have unto John Garard a poor Country man of  
mine three bushels of corne to be paid him presently after my  
desese \*\*\*\*

I have a letter that came from My Brother from Kingsile after  
his returne from Spaine Being ferced from home in the war in  
which Letter he sent for mee home; but the troubles in Cristifars  
at that tyme and fersed me from thence to New England and soe  
hee herd not of mee nor I of him \*\*\*\*

I will that letter with another within it is; to be sent to him  
with a letter to signifie unto him how it hath ben with mee since  
and when and where I end my dayes \*\*\*\* here followeth som  
deapts dowe to him which were all or most part dow with all  
before his desese.



Richard Dunn of Newport shall be aded untoe the first mentioned Gardian whome I doe desire and betrusted unto see that all before written and after in this may be parformed and that if aither of these soo Before mennoned betrusted should die before that my haire is of Edge; then hee that doth survive shall have power; and my will is that hee chuse one to him it being one that my haire doth approve \*\*\*\*\*

My ould mere I Give unto Samuel Bennet and hir foule or my youngest mere I give unto Mychell Spenser \*\*\*\* and the rest of my Chatle Goodes and Catter I give unto John Spenser Senior and all my deapts dowe to me \*\*\*\*

As Concaning the Land that I Give unto my haire and the house my will is that the land and house be unto him and his lawfull haire for-ever \*\*\*\* her followeth his mind concaning some Goodes hee had in his custise of John Rice when Hee mead this will be delivered them to the owner before his death therefore I dowe omitte it \*\*\*\* and for the Conformation of this my will and that it may apere unto all parsons unto whome it may come I have sett to my hand and seale this psent 18th day of February 1682.

S                      The Mark  
Charles                      Macarte  
and seale (L. S.)

Signed sealed in the pr'sentes of  
John Night  
Thomas Fry Junior

Entered into this Book of Record this 22and of March, 1683 or  
4 By mee

John Spenser      Town Clark

The places where asterisks appear are unreadable words in the record of the original will which is at the Town Hall in East Greenwich. From the spelling in this document it is easy to imagine the English accents of these old settlers. Also of interest is the fact that John Spencer, who as clerk did the writing, spells his own name "Spenser", instead of Spencer as is common today.

Very little is known about Charles McCarthy. Because the Spencers figure so definitely in his will it may be that he

was related to them in some way. This theory has been worked on but nothing conclusive has ever been forthcoming.

THOMAS FRY — b. 1632 — d. 1704

Thomas Fry was a man of some position in Newport, serving as General Sergeant from 1676-1691. He did come to East Greenwich but lived here a very short time. He was married to Mary Griffin. It is interesting to note that three of the grantees, John Spencer, Thomas Nichols and Thomas Fry, all married girls named Griffin. There was also a Benjamin Griffin among the original group awarded land, who did not take up his grant. He is thought to have been the son of Robert Griffin and the three girls were probably his sisters.

It was in 1689 that Thomas Fry deeded to his eldest son, Thomas, all right to land owned in East Greenwich, reserving only the profits of one hundred acres for himself during his lifetime. Thomas, Jr. became owner of much other land in the Middle Road, South County Trail and Frenchtown sections.

The Frys have been in East Greenwich since its beginning and elsewhere in this volume is a history of the family.

JOHN PEARCE — b. 1632 — d. 1692

John Pearce, a mason by trade, was called "John Pearce, the Mason", to distinguish him from John Pearce, son of Richard. With the permission of the General Assembly he sold his land, in 1678, to Henry Matteson. Henry was born in 1646 and married Hannah Parsons. He died in 1690, leaving six children, five of them boys to carry on the name. These children all married and, when Henry died at forty-four years of age, he left forty-four grandchildren. The Mattesons all did well financially and left wills alluding to farms, orchards, a cider mill, cattle, and pounds sterling as well. This original farm grant was on Division Street near Barton's Corner.

THOMAS DUNGAN — b. ? — d. 1688

Thomas Dungan was born in St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London, England, the son of William and Frances Dungan.

William Dungan worked as a perfumer. After his death, his wife married Jeremiah Clarke and they came to this country with the four Dungan children, Thomas, William, Barbara and Frances.

Thomas Dungan married Elizabeth, daughter of Clement Weaver and he, like his father-in-law, was one of the forty-eight grantees of land in East Greenwich. In April, 1678, Thomas Dungan was elected one of two Representatives from East Greenwich to the General Assembly; his brother-in-law, Clement Weaver, was the other incumbent. During the time Thomas was in the Assembly, and prior to that, he studied for the ministry under the Rev. William Vaughn, whom his mother married after the death of Jeremiah Clarke.

In 1682 he deeded, for love, to his nephew, Thomas Weaver of Newport, one hundred acres in East Greenwich. In 1684 he went to Cold Spring, Pennsylvania, and there established the first Baptist church in that state. He and his wife had nine children, five sons and four daughters, and a local historian tells us that "Rev. Thomas Dungan, the first Baptist minister in the Province, now (in 1770) exists in a progeny of between 600 and 700".

#### GILES PEARCE — b. 1651 — d. 1698

Born in 1651, probably in Portsmouth, Giles was the son of Richard and Susannah (Wright) Pearce. He was made a freeman of Portsmouth in 1673 and in 1677 was granted land in East Greenwich. In 1678 he married Elizabeth, daughter of William and Mary Hall. He served as deputy, moderator and member of the Town Council. The first town meeting here was held in his home in 1677.

Giles Pearce had two sons and three daughters. At his death in 1698, he left a will in which his widow was to occupy his house and land until his son John became of age, at which time he would share half the profits with his mother. Most of Giles' land was on the north side of Frenchtown Road. In his will John also received a pair of oxen and three cows. To his eldest son, Jeremiah, he left a horse, ninety acres of land, a

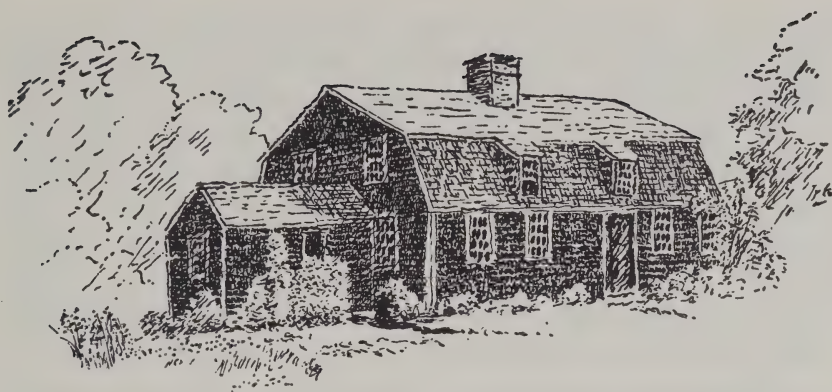


pair of oxen and three cows. To his eldest daughter, Susanna, he left a feather bed, thirty pounds, two cows and a heifer. At his wife's decease Susanna was to have the Negro girl, Frances. This mention of a Negro girl is the first entry of slave-holding in East Greenwich records. To his daughter, Elizabeth, he left a feather bed, thirty pounds, two cows and a heifer and to daughter Mary, at age eighteen, the same bequest.

For these early times Giles Pearce was evidently a man of means. His inventory included 167 pounds and 4 shillings in cash, four oxen, seven cows, several heifers, four calves, eighteen sheep, eight lambs, a horse, a mare, four spinning wheels, two guns, carpenter's tools, other sundries and the negro girl.

These were the men of early Greenwich, the actual settlers of the town. They were family men, eager to build homes and farm the land which, when they took over, was nothing but forest. Nevertheless, the land was evidently coveted, because immediately after the apportionment by the Assembly, requests were received by them from individuals who asked that any land not claimed or authorized for sale should be made available to the applicants.

It is interesting to speculate on what manner of men they were—probably serious, even staid, but with a spirit of adventure and determination to settle this new town in the Colony of Rhode Island.



BROWN BREAD PLACE — 1710

## CHAPTER IV

### *The Huguenots in Frenchtown—1686*

There is a chapter in the history of East Greenwich that has the ring of tragedy. It is the story of the small band of French Huguenots who tried, and failed, to settle in East Greenwich. These Frenchmen, refugees from religious persecution in France, were the victims of land speculators who, even then were too numerous for the good of our country. In order to better understand the difficulties encountered by these Huguenots, it is necessary to sketch in some background history.

In 1644 Samuel Gorton induced the Indians to sign the "Act and Deed" of voluntary submission to Charles II of England. This document, signed by Pessacus, made the Indians subject to the laws of the United Colonies. Samuel Gorton, John Wickes and Randall Holden were appointed Indian commissioners.

In November, 1658, the General Assembly of the Colony of Rhode Island forbade the sale of land by the Indians without its permission. In July, 1659, Major Humphrey Atherton of Massachusetts and his associates, known as the Atherton

Company or the Bay Purchasers, acquired from the Indian sachems two tracts of land, one the Boston Neck or Southern Purchase, the other the Quidnessett or Northern Purchase. It was only during the previous year that the Assembly had forbidden the sale of land by the Indians, so that the Atherton group labeled the tracts as "gifts" from the Indians. This company, when first formed, was composed of: Major Atherton, John Winthrop, governor of Connecticut, Richard Smith and Richard Smith, Jr. of Cocumscussuc, William Hudson and Amos Richardson of Boston, and John Tinker of Nashua.

The next move in this sequence of events came in the summer of 1659, when an expedition of Indians did some damage to an Englishman's house and killed a Mohegan Indian. The United Colonies levied a fine of nearly 600 fathoms of wampum and sent an armed force to collect from the Narragansetts. In lieu of payment, a mortgage was signed in September, 1660, by three sachems: Qussucquanah, Ninigret and Scuttop, mortgaging the Narragansett country to the authorities. In 1662 Major Atherton, who had considerable influence with the Indians, told them that he would pay their fine if they would make out a mortgage for the Narragansett country to him and his associates. The Indians, knowing no better, did so. The first mortgage was, of course, still in effect. The men of the Atherton Company knew this very well, but they had no love for Rhode Island, in fact their loyalties were more on the side of the colonies of Massachusetts and Connecticut. They were greedy for land and the first two tracts they acquired, the Boston Neck and Quidnessett Purchases, had the advantages of fine soil and accessibility to the bay. All land between these two tracts was owned, most conveniently, by Richard Smith of Wickford, a member of the Atherton Company. Smith tried to bring his partner, Roger Williams, into the pact with the Indians, but Williams refused to act even as interpreter, labeling the whole transaction as illegal.

The Atherton Company was very anxious to acquire all the territory in the Narragansett country, by fair means or foul. Gov. Andros, who represented the King in this area, had his headquarters in Boston, far from the scene of this land

battle. The land claimed by the Atherton Company included what is now the entire counties of Washington and Kent. In 1672 the Rhode Island Assembly confirmed the Boston Neck and Quidnessett acquisitions by the Atherton Company but never acknowledged the mortgage it obtained from the Indians. Atherton's claim to the mortgaged lands was rejected by Governor Andros. Atherton then appealed to the English crown for the land grant, but the request was refused. It was upon the illegally obtained mortgage that the Atherton Company based its claim to the land in East Greenwich which they later sold to the French Huguenots. Meantime, in 1677, the Rhode Island Assembly made land grants to forty-eight loyal Rhode Islanders and established East Greenwich as a township. The grant included the disputed territory, and it was inevitable that there would be trouble.

In 1686 a committee of the Atherton Company, composed of Richard Wharton, Elisha Hutchinson and John Saffin, agreed with a group of Huguenots, headed by Ezechie Carré and Peter Breton, that they, with other refugee Frenchmen, would settle on a plantation in the Narragansett Country to be called Newberry. The Huguenots thought this land too far from the shore, so they were sold a tract of land in what is now, and was then, a part of the township of East Greenwich.

The location of this tract of land where the Huguenots settled is hard to place exactly, but as nearly as can be determined, the actual settlement of Frenchtown was bound on the north by Frenchtown Road, on the south near the Exeter line, on the east by what is now South County Trail and on the west by the West Greenwich line. These boundaries are a rough estimate of location as the roads differed in early days and the towns of Exeter and West Greenwich were non-existent. We have come to use the word "Frenchtown" rather loosely to designate a large area west of the town of East Greenwich proper. Actually the small settlement, containing about twenty-five houses, was confined to a much smaller area. On the South County Trail the State of Rhode Island has placed an historical marker to help locate the site of the settlement.



Wm. Barbur
Paul Collin
Jean Germon
Dechamps
Fougere
Grignon
Legare
Robineau

Est
Bertin dit Lavonde
Menardeau
Galay
Ratier
Dauid
Beauchamps
Moize le Brun

Meadow  
Ground

The Great Road that leads between the Home Lots that leads to the Great Plains on the way to Boston.

Peter Ayrault
Magni Junior
Magni Senior
Dauid Junior
Dauid Senior
Chadene
Foretier
Ezechial Carre' Ministre
Louis Alaire
Jamain
Russereau
Amian
Lefon
Belhaiv
Milard
Jouet
Renaud
Grasillier
Le gendre

The Great River running to the Est

The Great Road running by the river into the Woods.

La terre por l'Eglise
La terre por L'ecolle
Le Braton
Le Vigne
Tauervrier
Bouniot
Lemoine
Abram Tourtellot
La Veué Galay
Targé Junior
Targé Senior
Arnaud
Lambert
Rambert
Coudret
Jean Julien
Ouest

The Great Lots belonging to the Home lots.

Sud

The tract was divided according to an agreement with the Atherton company: that each family was to have one-hundred acres of upland, and meadow land in proportion. The price was twenty pounds the one hundred acre, if paid in cash, or twenty-five pounds if a three year deferment of payment was desired. Pastor Carré was allotted one hundred and fifty acres and an additional one hundred and fifty acres for a glebe and school.

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These French Huguenots were a notch above the ordinary emigrant to this country. They were, for the most part, people of education and position, seeking refuge from religious persecution resulting from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Pastor Carré was born on the Isle de Ré. He was a Genevan student and was forty years of age when he came to Rhode Island. The two Davids, senior and junior, came from one of the best families in La Rochelle and Abram Tourtellot came from Bordeaux. Most of this group came from the area between Bordeaux and La Rochelle, France. They were closely knit families, with high hopes for a fine future in the New World. They had much to offer; with clever hands the women could fashion delicate laces and exquisite embroidery. It is said that glove-making, too, was one of their many accomplishments. They brought with them small fruit trees and seed to be planted near their homes. They carried, from across the sea, mulberry bushes with a view to making silk, and grape vines to be planted here. Some of the cherry and apple trees still bear fruit and local people still speak of "French Orchard" in Frenchtown.

But their stay here was short. Legal entanglements, involving the Atherton Company and Rhode Island authorities, put the Huguenots right in the middle and squeezed them out. It was inevitable that the men in this town who, in 1677, had been allotted farm land in the western section, would consider the Frenchmen as squatters. The Huguenots, with very little knowledge of the English language, were bewildered by the savage attacks on their homesteads by the English settlers. In July, 1687, some men from East Greenwich and Kingston forcibly carried away forty loads of hay from the meadows of

the Frenchmen. Dr. Pierre Ayrault reported the matter to Governor Andros, who made the following statement to Rhode Island authorities:

"Whereas complaint hath been made unto me by several of the French Protestants settled in Narragansett country, that John Swett, Joseph Reynolds, Henry Reynolds, Thomas Bray and several others, have of late, without right or lawful authority mowed the meadows, lying near to their settlement, and have forcibly carried away the grass and hay from thence, by means thereof, they are left destitute of hay or fodder for their cattle in winter, and if not relieved therein, it will be their utter ruin. These are therefore to authorize and require you, to call before you the persons above named, and such others as you shall find have been concerned in mowing of said meadow, and what right or title they or either of them have to the said meadow; and unless some particular grant shall be shown to you for the same, you are to cause said grass or hay, cut off the said meadow, as aforesaid, or the like quantity, as can be found in the possession of those that cut the same, to be seized and secured, and forthwith to make report to me of your proceedings herein, that such further order may be given, as shall be thought necessary".

This statement was made in a letter to Captain John Fones, Justice of the Peace, on July 14, 1687.

Having evidently heard from Capt. Fones, the Governor sent another letter, dated Aug. 5, 1687, which stated:

"\*\*\*\*\* I do, therefore, for the accommodation of said parties for the present, till the right thereto can be determined and settled, order and appoint, that all hay cut and made upon said meadows, as aforesaid, be by the direction of any two Justices of the Peace, forthwith divided into two equal shares or moieties, and that one moiety thereof, be given for the use of John Nichols, Gyles Pierce and George Vaughan, of Greenwich, aforesaid; and James Reynolds, James Reynolds, Jr., Henry Reynolds, Joseph Reynolds, Francis Reynolds, John Swett, William Bentley, John Andrew and George Haven of Kingston, share and share alike, who I am informed live remote and are most wanting thereof. And the other moiety to be left for the use and benefit of the said French families there, who, being strangers, and lately settled, and wholly destitute, and having no other way to supply themselves. And all persons therein concerned, are to take notice

hereof, and conform themselves thereunto accordingly, until further orders shall be given in said matter”.

The enmity between the English settlers and Huguenots continued. It is quite evident from letters written by Dr. Ayrault, dated 1700, that the good doctor had little comprehension of the difficulties in which they were involved. He was, naturally, resentful when a group of Greenwich men routed him out of his bed in the middle of the night to take him for a trial at the home of Pardon Tillinghast. With the language difference, it was probably hard to make any headway on either side. Roads in the vicinity, put through the wilderness by hard work of the settlers, were fenced off by the Frenchmen. The men of East Greenwich, whose strong-arm methods are to be deplored, were nevertheless in the right with the law of the colony of Rhode Island to back them up. The Huguenots, in good faith, purchased land that was not for sale. The true culprits were the Atherton group, whose members employed sharp practice in dealing with both the Indians and the Huguenots.

Most of the Frenchmen finally lost heart and left here for Oxford, Massachusetts, or other places where Huguenot colonies had already been established. A few hardy souls remained, straightening out their difficulties by law, with local residents softening up a bit. Strangely enough, Dr. Ayrault was one of those who remained. He was a native of Angers, France, and had practiced medicine there before embarking on his venture. It is believed that he moved into the village of East Greenwich and did practice his profession for a time. At his death in 1711, the family moved to Newport. His descendants married into well-known Rhode Island families, such as the Tillinghasts, Cranstons, Robinsons and others.

Moses Le Moine was another Huguenot who stayed here. He built his house near a spring on the land now owned by the Mathers, and planted an orchard there. The name gradually became Anglicized, changing from Le Moine to Money and also to Mawney. Peter Mawney, son of Moses, married Mary Tillinghast, daughter of Pardon. When she died in 1726. he married her sister, Mercy or Marcy Tillinghast. The Maw-



neys also married into the Fry, Whipple and Gardiner families.

Abram Tourtellot, whose name appears on the Frenchtown plat, was a merchant. He lived here a short time but was better known as a resident of Newport.

Allaire left here and settled in Boston; Beauchamp went to Hartford; Collin also went to Connecticut. Barbret and Grignon were later listed as elders in the French Church in Boston. The Legare family settled in Charleston, South Carolina, and Grasilier became a leader in the colony of Huguenots in New York.

The name of Targe, senior and junior, appears on the plat. In some old deeds this name is also spelled Tourgee, as it is better known today. One of the descendants of note was Dr. Eben Tourgee, who, in the 1860's, taught music at the Academy when it was called Providence Conference Seminary and Musical Institute. He later, in 1867, founded the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston.

Other Huguenot names, or their variants, still heard hereabout are: Le Valley, Jacques, Le Baron, Geoffroy, Alaire and Lambert.

Thus does the history of the Huguenots in East Greenwich disclose a tragic episode. It is to be regretted that things worked out as they did. These Frenchmen, had they remained in number, might have improved many aspects of the early life in the township. The English settlers were mostly farmers, uneducated and uncultured. A merging of their hardiness and industry with the dexterity and culture of the Huguenots would have been beneficial to both factions. There is material in this situation for a novel or a poem as poignant as "Evangeline".

Although this little colony ceased to exist some two hundred and fifty years ago, the people did leave their mark on the town of East Greenwich. The locality where they tried to settle will ever be known as Frenchtown, to remind us of those unhappy victims of circumstances.



OLD UPDIKE HOUSE — 1825

## CHAPTER V    📖    📖    📖    📖

### *The Appearance of the Town in Early Times*

And so they came and proceeded to lay out a town. The main thoroughfare was King Street, running from the waterfront directly up the hill, meeting Main Street at the hilltop. Main Street, running from north to south, was not considered the main artery until the latter half of the eighteenth century. Parallel with King Street were streets bearing such impressive names as London and Queen Streets and, parallel with Main Street, were such regally named arteries as Marlborough, Duke, and Castle Streets. This naming of streets reflects the close tie that existed between these early settlers and their English homeland, and also shows the high hopes the founders had for the future of their town.

In observing the teeming traffic that pours daily through East Greenwich, it is hard to imagine these early streets. They

were originally laid out on a liberal scale: sixty or one-hundred feet wide in most instances and even one-hundred and sixty-five feet wide in some places. The purpose of the wide street was to provide pasture for the cattle belonging to the townspeople. It was for this reason that all livestock had to be earmarked. The European custom of earmarking cattle had been used by these men in Newport as early as 1641. This practice was carried to East Greenwich, where earmarks were recorded and right of property recognized by the marking on the ears of the various animals. They were allowed to roam hither and thither and the main thoroughfare of the town served as common grazing ground. Later, there was a town pound beneath the barn of the Town Farm on First Avenue. There the strays were cared for until their owners identified and claimed them. On Middle Road, near Tarbox Corner, there is another ruin of stone and timber resembling a pound, but this is not authenticated. This condition, using the street for common grazing, existed in town probably through the middle of the 1800's. So the width of the street had method and usefulness.

Some trouble with wandering cattle thieves was experienced in these early days. They would ride through town at night and round up some cattle, driving over the state line to sell them. When the nippy weather came, the owners had to round up their cattle and find shelter for them. These browsing animals served to keep the grass neatly trimmed and bushes closely clipped, but there surely must have been many other disadvantages!

In laying out the town it was intended to be about as it appears now: roads and streets in a straight line, running parallel or at right angles with each other. In early days this was an impossible ambition to realize, especially on the outer edges of the town where there were bogs that, at many seasons of the year, were impassable. There was a beauty of a bog at the foot of Division Street, near where it now joins the cement road, just west of Greene Farm. In fact, this small hill was at one time called Governor's Hill. In traveling out of town to go westward, it was advisable to turn off Division Street at

Kenyon Avenue and go south to Payne's Pond, taking a right turn at what is now Cedar Avenue and arrive back on Division Street beyond the morass that would surely have bogged anyone down. The bridge just beyond this bog had a reputation for many years as a "trembler". It was aptly called the "Dancing Bridge" and the lightest carriage would send it into a frantic dance.

Another short cut is still visible at the entrance to the Eldredge place, just beyond the Swedish Cemetery on Division Street. The cut-off there was used to avoid an abrupt rocky climb which is now just another hill to the motorized traveler. Down at Fry's Corner was another narrow passageway with room for just one carriage with a ditch on one side and brook on the other. Certainly no place to drive on a dark night!

At the foot of Mascachaug Hill, now called Bleachery Hill, there was another bridge of doubtful safety. When the spring freshet rose, the planks of the bridge were under water. Dr. Eldredge, in his diary, tells us that it was not until 1823, when Carr Harrington was Surveyor of Highways, that a sturdier bridge was constructed where there is one crossing Post Road now. Several others were built there since, the present one was constructed in 1940.

The building of the town proceeded slowly, many of the homes in early times being small, one-room houses in what are now the Shippeetown, Fry's Corner and Middle Road sections of East Greenwich. Many provided the basis for larger farmhouses still standing in the western part of the town. This locality, rather than the present village, was the actual settlement of the town in the first twenty-five years of its existence. The town lots were not apportioned until later.

By 1700, the town was established and a government was in operation. The need for a business district and town lots was realized and so a group of men, calling themselves proprietors, bought from the state, land in what is now the built-up section, that is, from Division to London Streets along the Main Street and then east to the sea. They had it surveyed and divided into fifty quarter-acre lots. The lots were num-



bered and corresponding numbers were placed in a hat. It was voted that William R. Church be assigned to give each proprietor a lot as his number was drawn.

These proprietors were the actual settlers of the town, even more fully than the list of grantees. These family names appear repeatedly in town records from early times up to the present day. Following is a list of the proprietors, with the lot numbers as assigned:

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Michael Spencer       | 26. Benjamin Smith       |
| 2. Anthony Long          | 27. Capt. James Greene   |
| 3. David Vaughn          | 28. Oliver Carpenter     |
| 4. Richard Greene        | 29. Nath. Sheffield      |
| 5. Thomas Eldredge       | 30. Philip Tillinghast   |
| 6. Henry Renolds         | 31. Joseph Tolliver      |
| 7. Weston Clarke         | 32. Benjamin Greene      |
| 8. Matthew Grinnall      | 33. Jabez Greene         |
| 9. Thomas Stafford       | 34. Peleg Spencer        |
| 10. Benjamin Barton      | 35. Charles Holden       |
| 11. Capt. James Bowen    | 36. Eben Slocum          |
| 12. Robert Spencer       | 37. Simeon Smith         |
| 13. William Wanton       | 38. Thomas Fry           |
| 14. John Spencer         | 39. Ishmael Spink        |
| 15. William Knowles      | 40. Capt. Ben Greene     |
| 16. Clement Weaver       | 41. Samuel Greene        |
| 17. Lft. James Greene    | 42. Capt. James Carder   |
| 18. Major Randall Holden | 43. Thomas Wicks         |
| 19. John Waterman        | 44. John Wicks           |
| 20. Job Greene           | 45. John Nichols         |
| 21. Thomas Nichols       | 46. Gen. Samuel Cranston |
| 22. Thomas Spencer       | 47. Maj. Jos. Jenks      |
| 23. Daniel Sweet         | 48. John Mumford         |
| 24. Malachi Rhodes       | 49. Pardon Tillinghast   |
| 25. Amos Stafford        | 50. Francis Bates        |

The first meeting of the proprietors was June 6, 1700. They met at regular intervals thereafter and were a forerunner of our present Town Council. Their duties were many and matters coming before them varied from licensing the selling of strong liquor to settling land claims. The first zoning law of the town, drawn up by the proprietors in 1711, stipulated

that each "house be nine foot between joints, and to be no less and as much higher as they who build on said lot see cause, and said house to be finished within two years and six months from taking up said lot or lots, and if any person shall neglect or refuse to build as above expressed they shall forfeit said lots to the proprietors of said town". Colonial records show that many other Newport men were eager for land here and appealed to the General Assembly for any land forfeited in this manner. One of these men was Samuel Bennett, who did acquire land here later; and another was Henry Matteson, who was allowed to purchase land from John Pearce, an original grantee.

As late as 1830 there were no houses on the southwest side of Main Street, from where the shopping center owned by Gerard Dunn is today, to the Slocum house (now owned by Joseph Tommasino) which stands on the brow of Bleachery Hill.

In approaching the town from the south, the Main Street narrowed to a mere pathway in front of the Brick House, which is now the office of Dr. Charles Phillips. There was a stone bluff there which projected into the road and left barely room for one carriage to squeeze through. Some years later the obstacle was removed by Thomas R. Tilley and the stone used for building purposes.

At the foot of the hill near the Bleachery, all land on the east side of the main road belonged, for many years, to the Casey family. The land was used for pasture and extended clear through to Rocky Hollow Road. Continuing from there to London Street, on the same side of the main road, was another expanse of land which was owned by Dr. Peter Turner and was called by him "Skunk's Misery".

So it was that the town actually extended from London Street to Division Street then east to the bay and west, after 1741, to the West Greenwich line. London Street led down to the shore, as it does now. On the right on the brow of the hill just before it dipped down to the shore was the burial

ground. Although this was sometimes used as a pauper's graveyard, there is some reason to believe that other townspeople were buried there as well. As the locality grew, the bodies were removed to other burial places. Continuing down to the shore, the jutting point at shore level was called Haven's Point. The use of this name has been abandoned in recent years. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Cromptons had a wharf just south of Haven's Point and they ran a coal, hay and grain business.

West of Main Street, diagonal to London Street was, and is, Peirce Street, named for the Peirce family whose homestead was where the library is now. On the south corner of Peirce and Main Streets there still stands what is known as the Pitcher house, built in the early 1800's, which now belongs to the McKone family. Proceeding up the hill there was no building on the west side of Peirce Street until the Friend's Meeting House was erected in 1804. This building stood at the head of Dedford Street, facing Main Street, until it was torn down in 1952. Next to the Quaker Meeting House was the Kent Academy (later East Greenwich Academy) built in 1802 and this adjoined the Congregational Church, built in 1774, on the site where the Episcopal Church stands today.

Next on the west side of Peirce came the General Varnum House, built in 1773 and still a beautiful example of colonial architecture. On the corner of Peirce and Melrose Streets stands the home of Oliver Wickes, built in 1785. The last house on that side of the street is dated 1773 and was built by John Reynolds. Ten years later he sold the house and land to Nathan Greene. In 1816, the house was purchased by Dr. Chas. Eldredge and has since been known as the Eldredge House. It is now owned by Miss Charlotte House.

Returning to the foot of Peirce Street at Main Street, on the northwest corner stood a house called "Stirling Castle". Built about 1776 by Joseph Greene of Ropewalk fame, it was later repaired and rebuilt by Capt. Clark Brown. He and his family lived there for many years. In 1956, this building was razed and the site is now owned by the estate of Israel Jacobson.

Coming along up the hill, there were no buildings on the east, or right hand side, of Peirce Street until the Dr. Turner House was built in 1774, and nothing more until the corner of Division Street where Nathan Miller and his son, James, had a silversmith shop at the rear of their home. This was as early as 1755. Thus from Dedford Street down to Main and north from there to the Court House was "common ground". Lots there were crisscrossed with paths made by schoolboys on their way to and from the Academy.

Turning up the hill at the Eldredge House on Division Street there was no house then, on the north or Warwick side, with the exception of the Gov. Greene place on the corner of Division Street and Love Lane (or Tallman Lane, as it was called then). On the south side of Division, just above the Eldredge House, still stands a very handsome colonial house built by Allen Fry in 1785. It is now the property of Mrs. Lucius Eldredge. West of this house is a small cottage called, for some unknown reason, the Ichabod House. Here for a number of years lived Solomon Fry, a much respected colored man.

Cresting the hill we come to the Windmill Cottage, built in 1818 by Jeremiah Gardiner. It was occupied at one time by Prof. George W. Greene, grandson of Gen. Nathanael Greene. The windmill was carried over from across West Street to provide a study for the professor. The house is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Paul R. Ladd.

From this point on up Division Street there were no buildings for many years. From the shore to the top of the hill at Windmill Cottage is one hundred and sixty feet above sea level. South from Division Street runs Kenyon Avenue, and until after 1800, there were no buildings with the exception of the Dr. Thomas Spencer House, now the Westminster Unitarian Church. First built in 1700, it was rebuilt in 1774; this house, too, was destroyed by fire and the present structure erected. Its location is impressive as it stands atop Sunset Rock, the nearest thing to a mountain in East Greenwich. Sunset Rock has been variously named over the years, some-



times called Tarpeian Hill and Spencer Hill. So, the land sloped down from Division Street to First Avenue (then Asylum Road) with almost no interruption of buildings.

Above Peirce Street in what is now the Rector-Brayton-Church Street vicinity, was the Grove. This was a beautiful spot with large oak trees shading lanes where courting couples strolled on balmy days. In Dr. Eldredge's diary he deploras the fact that this grove was "allowed to be destroyed in 1883-4, for the paltry sum that the trees brought for firewood".

Below Main Street there were, at this early period, no buildings from Rocky Hollow Road to Ropewalk Hill. Along the shore from Ropewalk Hill to the Warwick line there were numerous wharves, docks and storehouses for goods, both incoming and outgoing. Between London and Division Street there were, with the exception of King Street, very few homes before 1800. The house on Duke Street owned by the Wright family was built in 1775 and the Dawley house, on the corner of Duke and Wine Streets, was built in 1800.

The Main Street had, in early days, a few buildings scattered between London and Division Streets. The majority of these are "long gone". The remaining old ones are: the Brick House, 1767, the Stanhope House, at the corner of Armory Street, 1755, and the Abraham Greene House, north of the Town Hall, 1770.

The western part of the town, along Middle, Frenchtown and Shippeetown Roads, had many old farmhouses built in the early 1700's. Some few still stand, but most of them have had to be rebuilt and renovated to make them livable. Many have grown from one room domiciles into eight or nine room farmhouses. The family names of Fry, Shippee, Vaughn, Bailey, Tibbitts and Spencer are still common in this area after the passage of two hundred and eighty years.

This chapter might have been entitled "As We Were", for the town has changed greatly, especially in the village section, in the last century or so. It seems imperative that this information be set down today, so that it will not be lost for tomorrow.

## POTOWOMUT

Potowomut, as far as legal boundaries are concerned, is part of the city of Warwick, but head, heart and history it is an integral part of the town of East Greenwich. It has been so closely associated with events in this town that, even though we wander over the line, it is only fitting that the history of Potowomut be touched upon here.

This section was, in the beginning, a hunting ground for the Narragansett Indians. The name "Potowomut" means "Land of Fires". Geographically, Potowomut lies south of Warwick Neck and extends from the Post Road to the Potowomut River in an easterly direction along Forge Road, which divides it down the middle. A short distance in from the Post Road is Ives Road, which cuts off at right angle to the Forge Road and runs northerly to Potowomut Neck, a peninsula formed by Greenwich Cove, Cowesett Bay and Greene's River.

In 1684, the sachem of the Potowomut tribe of the Narragansett Indians sold this territory to Randall Holden and Ezekiel Holliman, both of Warwick. The price was "the just sum of fifteen pounds dewly paid and received all ready in wampum peague". The agreement also stated that the sachem Taccomanan was to receive yearly "one coat of such cloth as ye indeans do commonly wear".

Just in from the Post Road, on Forge Road, is the Elizabeth Spring. It was part of the famous Pequot Trail and served the Narragansetts as a drinking place on their travels. The water was refreshing and many a weary traveler in later years enjoyed the cool spring water. Madam Sarah Knight in her "Private Journal of a Journey from Boston to New York in the year 1704" tells of crossing the Mascachaug River "wch my Guide told mee was the hazzardos River he had told me off". The Elizabeth Spring was named by Roger Williams in honor of Elizabeth Read, second wife of Gov. John Winthrop, who died at an early age. In 1884, in the interest of historical preservation, Dr. James H. Eldredge had the spring

renovated and put a mill-stone over the edge of the spring to protect it. Into the center of the stone he placed a marble tablet bearing this inscription: "Elizabeth Spring, so-called, from Mistress Elizabeth Winthrop drinking at it in her travels up to Connecticut in ye beginning of ye country as early as 1645."

The first actual settler in the Potowomut area was James Greene. He was the son of Surgeon John Greene, the progenitor of the Greenses of Rhode Island. It was in 1684, when he was sixty-two years old, that James came to Potowomut. His son, Jabez, with Thomas Hill as his partner, built a forge, saw and grist mill, using the power from a dam across Greene's River. Later, descendants of Jabez Greene acquired the whole property and a prosperous community, commonly called "Greene's Forge" or "Puttywoome", was established there. Jabez Greene was the grandfather of General Nathanael Greene.

When Jabez died in 1741, his son Nathanael continued to run the forge, and he also inherited the homestead. He had eight sons, all of whom probably worked at the forge, but Christopher and Elihu worked closely in running the mills for many years. Nathanael, Jr., later the famous general, worked at the forge in Potowomut until his twenty-seventh year, when he took over his own forge at Coventry. At the death of the elder Nathanael, Christopher Greene inherited the homestead and Elihu, with his family, had the house just west of the Forge Bridge, where the Waterman property is today. The present owner of the birthplace of General Nathanael Greene is Thomas Casey Greene, a descendant of James Greene, who built the house so long ago.

Across the pond from the homestead stands another lovely old place, built in the 1680's by Thomas Hill, the partner of Jabez Greene. This house, called "The Hillstead" was, for many years the home of the late Mrs. Dana Lawrence, a descendant of the original owner. It is now the property of Leonard Lawrence and still retains that charm which only age and generations of family life can give to a house.

James Greene's nephew, Thomas, came to the area and settled his family, but in 1698 he was drowned while returning from a trip to Newport. His wife and seven children lived on the estate, about where Rocky Hill School is now. John Greene, son of Thomas, inherited that property and prospered in the importing, raising and selling of cattle. Before his death he gave his sons their own homesteads in Potowomut.

One of John Greene's sons was Richard, called "King Richard" because of the regal manner in which he lived, as well as because he was a Tory. He had ten children and their home was the scene of much gaiety and entertainment. At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Richard Greene made his loyalty to the English crown generally known. He entertained the King's men in lavish style, until the Rhode Island legislature stepped in and purchased his corn, pork, rye, sheep and beef, storing them in safe keeping. Richard was an old man at this time and moved to Newport, which was then in British hands, and died there in 1779.

In 1792, Hope Brown, daughter of Nicholas, married Thomas Poynton Ives. They came to live on the estate of "King Richard" Greene, which had come to his debtors, among whom were the Brown brothers of Providence. Nicholas Brown gave the farm to his daughter as a wedding present. The Ives family added land to their original acreage until they owned a large section of Potowomut Neck. The estate was called "Hopelands" and, after the death of Mr. Ives, his wife continued to maintain it until 1857. Her daughter, Charlotte, wife of Professor William G. Goddard, inherited "Hopelands" and her son, Robert H. Ives, the land on Greene's River. Her two grandchildren, children of Moses Ives, were left the land on the west side of Ives Road.

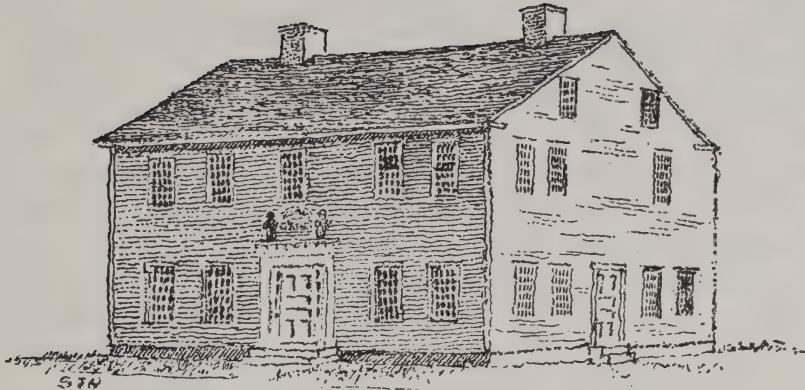
One of these grandchildren, Hope Brown Ives, married Henry C. Russell in 1864. In 1876, they built their home at Potowomut, calling it "The Oaks". The Russell house still stands at Goddard Park. Mr. Russell was an enthusiastic tree-grower and he raised seedling pine and other evergreens. From these beds, trees were transplanted until they formed a



long row along the banks of Greenwich Cove. He soon had an estate of lovely evergreens, as well as oak and other hardwood varieties of trees. "The Oaks" was a large house and many guests were entertained there, especially during the summer months. Forty or more persons were employed in and around the place, most of them from East Greenwich. Mr. Russell died in 1904, his wife five years later. Mrs. Russell left "The Oaks" to her cousin, Colonel Robert H. I. Goddard.

The Russells, Ives and Goddards are no longer residents of this area, but in 1927 a gesture was made to ever endear their memory to the people of Rhode Island. After the death of Col. R. H. I. Goddard, "The Oaks" and surrounding property came into the possession of his son, Robert H. I. Goddard and his daughter, Madeline, the Marquise d'An-digne. In 1927, they presented the greater part of the estate, including "The Oaks", to the State of Rhode Island, to be used as a public park in memory of their father. Goddard Park has become a fitting memorial to the families who lived in the vicinity. Every summer thousands of Rhode Islanders flock to the Park to swim, golf and picnic amid the red and white pines, the firs and spruces set out by those Potowomut families of so long ago.

It is plain to see that Potowomut and its people influenced the political, social and historical pattern of our town and so have a distinct role in the history of East Greenwich.



KENT COUNTY JAIL — 1804

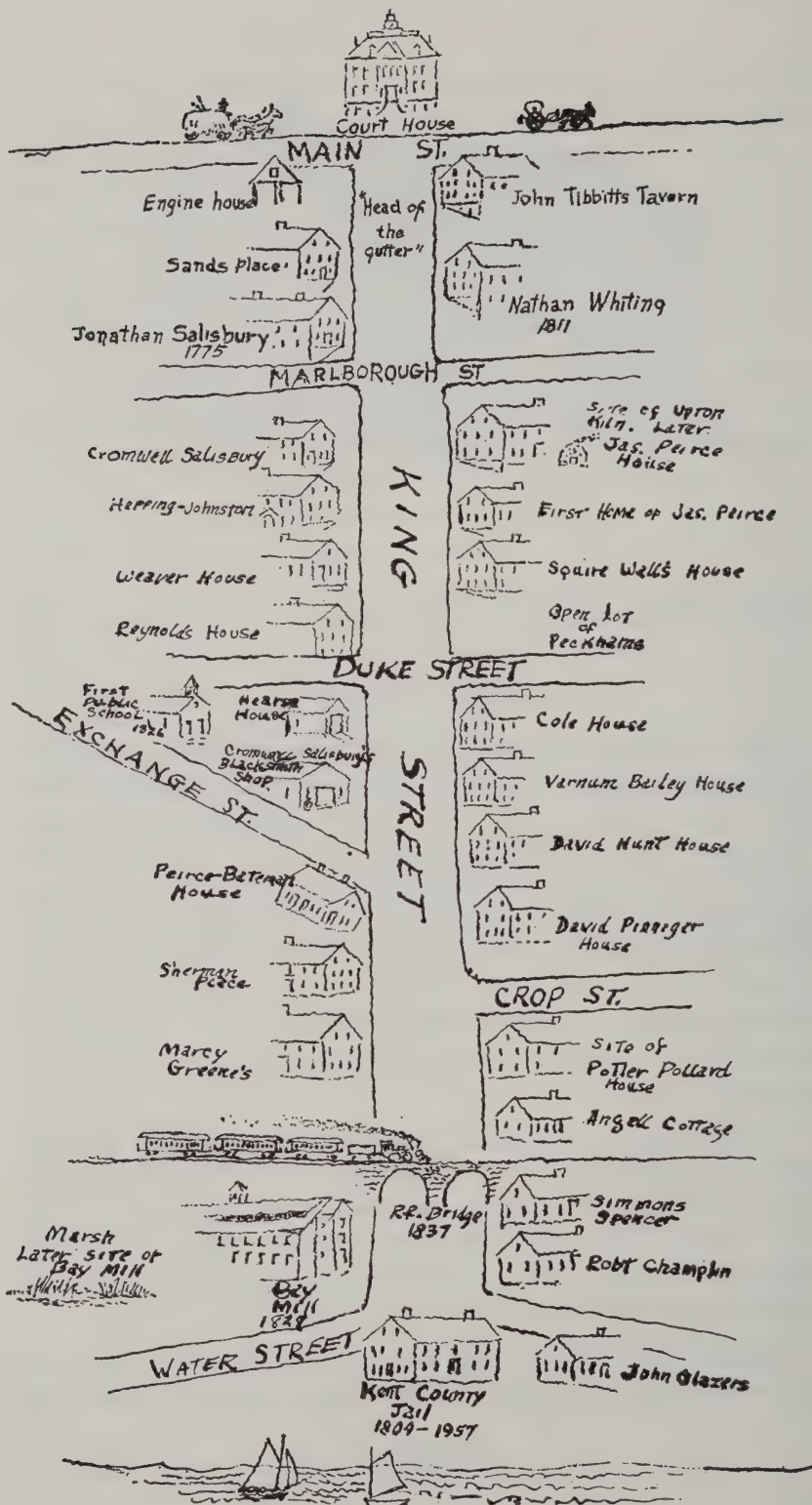
## CHAPTER VI

### *King Street*

Believing firmly that their town had a great maritime future, the founding fathers of East Greenwich intended that King Street should be the main thoroughfare of the town. The dignified Court House stood at the head of the street and the blue waters of Greenwich Bay marked its foot. The Embargo Act of the early 1800's spoiled their dreams for a shipping center here, but from the time of the Revolution until the Civil War, King Street was the finest residential section of East Greenwich. About 1820, this street was at the peak of its beauty and dignity, housing many prominent citizens of the town.

Main Street, crossing at the top of King Street, was for many years nicknamed "The Head of the Gutter"; here revolved the life, not only of the town, but of the whole of Kent County. Here on mild evenings, the East Greenwich counterpart of the "cracker barrel gang" gathered and discussed politics and the very latest gossip.

King Street and its inhabitants in these early days are well worth a special chapter in this book. Starting down the



hill, on the site of the commercial office of the New England Telephone Company, stood a large, white, two story building. The sign, swinging outside, read: "The Tibbitts Tavern", and here the genial host, John Tibbitts, greeted his guests. With a bit of imagination we can envision the sanded floor of the tap room, worn in many places; a wood fire burning on chilly evenings in the cast-iron box stove and, here and there, we could see carefully placed spit boxes filled with sawdust. Tavern-Keeper Tibbitts probably had little trouble with transients in those days since most of his customers lived within the radius of the town.

Moving down the hill, the next house on the left was the Whiting house. Now, only the east end of this house is the original part. The house is two stories high and has two large square chimneys. The west end must have been built later, as it has a much smaller chimney. The man who built this house was Nathan Whiting. Nathan was born in Franklin, Massachusetts, in 1774. In 1793 he entered Brown university. When he was admitted to the bar, he came directly to East Greenwich. In June, 1811 he married Sally Salisbury of Rehoboth and it is assumed that he then built this home. He became preceptor at the East Greenwich Academy in 1822 and the anecdotes about the Academy of his day have become legend. He was a splendid scholar himself, but had no ability to impart knowledge to others. He was absent-minded in the extreme and had a strong aversion to punishing wrong-doers. Full advantage of his failing was taken by the students. Those who really wished to learn found that he was most willing to answer questions and they received fine, scholarly answers and so were able to acquire a fair education. At this period in the history of the Academy the rate of tuition for three months was between two and three dollars per subject. Lawyer Whiting died in 1842, but the King Street dwelling stayed in possession of his family for three generations.

Just previous to the Revolutionary War, two brothers named Upton came to East Greenwich from Berkeley, Massachusetts. At the corner of King and Marlborough Streets they set up a kiln and manufactured earthenware. At that time



there were no porcelain manufacturers in the United States and the war prevented importing from Europe so people were obliged to use these coarse dishes for want of anything better. The clay for making this pottery was brought from a place called Gould's Mound in Quidnessett. Naturally, as soon as the war was over the demand for this crude product ceased, and no earthenware has been made here since.

In later years, on this same site, a large house was built by James Pierce. Mr. Pierce's first home was the house just below this one. He was a business man in town, being in partnership with William P. Salisbury in the hay and grain business. Their wharf was at the foot of Queen Street. Later, he was one of the company who bought the Bay Mill.

The next house on our way down King Street marks the site of the old Squire Wall house. The Walls were an old East Greenwich family and Henry Turner in his "Reminiscences of East Greenwich" speaks of Squire Wall as the sheriff of Kent County and keeper of the jail. This must have been in the early part of the nineteenth century. The Walls were here before the Revolution. William Wall married Hannah Cooke in 1742 and they had a family of eight children.

At the northeast corner of King and Duke Streets is the house that was the home of the Cole family. It stands flush with the edge of the sidewalk and most of the houses on this street are so placed. It faces on King Street but has a long ell running back on Duke Street, giving the impression of being a much larger house than it really is. There lived here at one time a jolly old man named Nathaniel Cole. He lived to be one hundred and one years old, keeping his faculties until the end and voting for president when he was one hundred years old. Meeting him on the street one day a man remarked on the fact that he was walking and old Nat replied: "Oh, yes, I can walk much smarter than I could one hundred years ago!"

Next below the Cole place is the Varnum Bailey house. The name of Varnum appears as a first name of many East Greenwich residents as General Varnum was a great hero here and many admirers named their children in his honor. This

house of Bailey's is one of the finest on King Street. Architecturally, it is a gem. There is not much material available about the people who resided there from which fact we may deduce that they were eminently respectable!

The next house stands gable-end to the street, which makes it different from all the other houses. This is known as the David Hunt house. David Whitford Hunt was born in North Kingstown in 1798 and married Mary Sherman. He lived in this house with this family of three children. A short time after the Civil War, the house was in a sad state of neglect and had to be entirely rebuilt. At that time the roof was taken off and a new one put on the other way, thus making this house distinguishable from all others on King Street.

The name of David Pinniger appears frequently in the annals of the town. He was a blacksmith who, in 1796, married Elizabeth Arnold, daughter of Captain Thomas Arnold. When David thought of buying land and building a home, he could have had his choice of land in the western part of the town, almost for the asking, but he had made up his mind that he must have land on the aristocratic King Street and for it he paid the then tremendous price of four hundred dollars. His house was a big one with two large square chimneys. It was well built and had beautiful colonial woodwork throughout. Although David had a fine reputation as a blacksmith, not one of his five sons followed his trade, all of them becoming sea captains instead. David Pinniger was one of the first members of St. Luke's Church and stood as sponsor for many new babies. It was said that he was godfather to most of the children in town.

One of the residents in the old Pinniger house was David's father-in-law, Captain Thomas Arnold. Captain Arnold was appointed first surveyor of the port by George Washington. He had served as an officer in the Revolutionary army and was wounded at the battle of Monmouth. As a result of the wound, he lost his right leg. A gruesome story is told about the musket ball which the surgeon removed from the leg: it

was sent home to Captain Arnold's wife, who had it made into a string of beads which she wore as a trophy!

As surveyor, Captain Arnold also had charge of the Customs House on Division Street and collected taxes on plate, carriages and watches. He sold stamps, without which a document was illegal. He also issued licenses. Trade with the Dutch East Indies was very extensive at this time and officers of trading ships always managed to arrive after nightfall. Plenty of smuggling was carried on, as the captain-surveyor's infirmity slowed him down considerably. The officers of incoming vessels slipped in at night while the one-legged official was safe in his bed. One night, because of a fog, a brig could not dock until early morning; her captain, much worried, consulted the surveyor's son, Isaac, who was a mischievous lad. Isaac said he would take care of everything and thereupon hid his father's wooden leg. When Captain Arnold arose in the morning he was unable to find the leg and thus was detained until the smuggling activities were taken care of and the brig was in perfect order for his inspection. So the Pinniger house is remembered for these colorful characters who once resided there.

Just below the Pinniger house is a modern house built by Fritz Johnson, on the site of the old Potter Pollard place. The Pollard house was built by a sea captain engaged in the East Indian trade. From one of his voyages he brought back a large mahogany log and from it was hewn a doorstep. The value of mahogany has changed a good deal since those days and a mahogany doorstep today would be an eye-catcher.

The next door neighbor of the Pollard house was called Angel Cottage. This stood on the edge of the sidewalk, but years ago it was moved half-way up the hill, to let a more modern house take its place. Angel Cottage was a very small house, one story in height and, in olden days, was painted a bright red. A sizable chimney occupied the center of the house, there was a room on either side of the front door, and on the east end was built a little lean-to. This lean-to served as Mr. Angell's store and the end of it came right against the



stone railroad bridge. The west end had such a queer gable that the south pitch of the roof was much larger than the north, owing to a little piece having been added on to the room just left of the door. It must have been a funny little place, with a style of architecture that defied all rules.

In 1837 the railroad was put through and at the foot of King Street an old house was torn down to make way for the bridge. This house was the Simmons Spencer place and was probably one of the first to be built on that street. Simmons was a direct descendant of the first John Spencer who settled in Greenwich and the house was probably built on the town lot assigned to those early Spencers. The house itself was unique. It was three stories high and built so that one could step out of a door on each of the three levels, so abrupt was the rise of the hill upon which it was built. There were two enormous chimneys, so that every room boasted a spacious fireplace. With houses like these, no one can say that our fellow townsmen of that era were hidebound conformists.

Just below the bridge was a roadway which turned north. At one time, the house of Robert Champlin stood at the northeast corner of this turn. The house was later removed to the north end of Duane Street in Warwick.

Now we have traversed the north side of King Street and will cross the street and start up the south side. But before we start it might be pertinent to recreate the water front at the foot of King Street and the townsmen who frequented the area. King Street is so situated that it drains most of the water from the upper part of the town, and so much mud and sand were washed down that the town fathers were worried for fear there might be danger from too much filling. They decided that if a wharf were built it might eliminate this danger. Jeremiah Bailey and Benjamin Howland were given exclusive rights to build a wharf and their heirs forever were to own this as an estate of their inheritance, if they paid the Town Treasurer six shillings a year for each and every year forever and hereafter. The wharf, which stood about where the south corner of the old jail is, had many large schooners tie up there.



Some were so big that when they were at anchor their bowsprits touched the corner of the mill. Along-side the wharf a good many ships came to anchor after long trips to the Indies. Most of the Greenwich-owned vessels were in island trade. They carried out fish, mules and calicos. They brought back sugar, rum, molasses and gin.

Previous to the Revolutionary War, slaves were brought in from the African Coast. Captain Benjamin Fry imported a cargo of slaves. He kept some of them and sold others hereabouts. Descendants of these slaves lived in East Greenwich and carried the names of their first masters.

After this slight deviation from King Street proper, we can start up the south side. A creek once flowed up King Street to the bridge, and land to the south of it used to be a salt marsh that was covered only at very high tide. In the last part of the eighteenth century, there lived on Duke Street a little stoop-shouldered man named Captain Benjamin Davis. He had a wife named Bathsheba and ten children. He was a carpenter, a ship's carpenter, and also a very religious man with frugal and saving habits. Whenever he could, he carried a wheelbarrow load of dirt or ashes and dumped them on this marsh land until, after many years, the land was firm. It was sold to a company which, in 1839, built a steam mill to manufacture cotton cloth. The mill was burned that same year and the ruins were purchased by J. C. Stamford of North Kingstown, and Waterman and Arnold of Providence. This was later known as the Shore or Bay Mill.

Passing under the railroad bridge, there was in those days an old-fashioned white house with a beautiful elm tree casting its shadow over it. Here lived Marcy Ann Greene. She was a most religious lady, who talked at length and with fervor at the Methodist prayer meetings. This pious lady had a wayward son who spent all of her money that he could lay his hands on and Marcy Ann became worried lest there would not be enough left to give her a decent burial. This became such an obsession with her that she not only made the clothes she was to be buried in but bought her cemetery lot, had her

grave dug, and her tombstone erected. She was even measured for her coffin before her death. She did have that funeral and afterward the house passed into other hands. It finally burned down in the late 1800's.

The next tall three-story house was called the Sherman place. Shortly after the Civil War it was purchased in a state of dilapidation by a man named Snell. In remodelling, the house lost most of its original lines, the big center chimney being taken out and two small ones put in.

On the corner of Exchange and King Streets stood the Benjamin Bateman or Pearce house. This, too, was three stories and was built of small old-fashioned bricks. On the east end was a small store which served as Mr. Bateman's apothecary shop. Benjamin Bateman married Alice Pearce, daughter of John, in July, 1805. The house probably belonged to her, for it seems to have been in the Pearce family previous to that date. Daniel Pearce, who was known as "Caulker Dan", lived there earlier. He earned his nickname for his skill in caulking boats. He sold chandler's wares in the little store that was later Bateman's shop. "Caulker Dan" had two unmarried daughters, Becky and Nancy, who were famous for their superb housekeeping. They hung their pewter dishes in the kitchen and scoured them until they shone like mirrors. On the crane in the large fireplace hung a row of iron kettles and these, too, were well scrubbed. The floor was of white maple and was kept spotlessly clean; it was very uneven and under the center leg of the table was placed a chip to keep the table at an even keel. It was said that for twenty years this same chip was taken out, scoured whenever the floor was washed, and then put back again to serve its purpose. This house was torn down over fifty years ago. A four tenement house owned by the Denice family now occupies the spot.

There is a tradition that before East Greenwich was settled, Rope Walk Hill was an island; that the water came up King and London Streets and flowed all along about where Duke Street is today and that all the lowland in the vicinity was covered with marsh grass. The sands washed down from

the hills above and slowly the creek filled up, so that when the founders laid out their town this became Duke Street.

The triangular piece of ground between King, Duke and Exchange Streets was originally intended for a market and was to become the property of any person who would erect upon it a building of specified dimensions, containing so many chopping blocks and stalls. The offer was never taken up and on this site the town finally built the first schoolhouse in East Greenwich. On the northeast corner of this piece of land, facing King Street, was the blacksmith shop of Cromwell Salisbury and here he made brass andirons, shovels, tongs and other implements. He was quite ingenious and invented patterns for making iron portions of many articles. This sort of article was at a premium in his time, as most of them had to be imported from Europe. Cromwell was born in Greenwich in 1792.

Just beyond the blacksmith shop stood the hearse-house. This was simply a small shed, just large enough to hold the only hearse in town. In those days you took your horse (if you owned one, if not, you borrowed one) went out and helped yourself to the hearse, returning it when the member of your family was buried. Funeral costs were certainly held down in those days!

Where a cottage now stands at the southwest corner of Duke and King Streets, there was a two-story white house. This was the Reynolds house, which burned many years ago. Next to it is an old-fashioned double house with a door at either end. It was built by one of the Weaver family and very little is known of its history.

Now comes the house which is probably the quaintest on the street. It was known as the Heffing-Johnston place, but was also at one time the home of Seneca Spencer, a bootmaker and great-grandson of old John Spencer, an original settler. It had such a big square chimney and such a long lean-to that the roof almost touched the ground. The little front door was built so low that a tall person had to duck to enter. The east end had a small basement where Mr. Johnston kept a

grocery store. There were two tiny windows, set deep in the brickwork and a narrow window-light in the door, letting in a very small amount of daylight. Through the years, of necessity, this house has changed a good deal, but the lines are still there and it is interesting to contemplate how it once looked.

We have now reached the corner of Marlborough Street and here we find the home of the blacksmith, Cromwell Salisbury (or Crom'ell, as he was popularly known). He was the son of Jonathan Salisbury and, like his father, was a tremendous man. At his death a special coffin had to be constructed to fit him.

On the southwest corner of King and Marlborough Streets stands a house which in its day was the most imposing residence on the street. At the west end it is two stories high, but on the east side, owing to the deep basement, there are three stories. This house had two beautiful front doors, one in the basement and the other on the second floor opening onto the piazza, the west end of the piazza being on ground level. The house was built right against the hill, therefore a flight of stone steps were necessary to reach the sidewalk. Years ago there was an abutment on the street side, with a row of broad flag-stones on the top. One dark night before the abutment was torn down a town character called, for some unknown reason, "Granny Railroad", mistakenly took the abutment for the sidewalk and fell ten feet into the gutter below. She escaped with little injury. This house was built in the latter part of the 1700's by Jonathan Salisbury. He was a giant of a man, weighing close to four hundred pounds. He had a stentorian voice and often sat on his stoop and conversed with his friends on Main Street. His loud voice was a terror to the boys of the village if they dared to meddle with the town pump, which was his special charge since he could see it from his piazza. He spent much time on this piazza, his immense size not being conducive to activity. He was wont to sit and read his newspaper aloud and the whole village quickly learned the news of the day. He had an old-fashioned chaise, built to accommodate two adults, which accommodated



him alone. Legends of his size and the power of his voice are numerous in East Greenwich.

Jonathan Salisbury's son, William Page Salisbury, who inherited the house, was also a colorful character. He was a sailing master of good repute and sailed some of the finest ships belonging to the famous Brown and Ives Company of Providence. He was fabulously fortunate in his voyages and the phrase "Salisbury's Luck" became a byword with mariners whenever they had a successful voyage. On a return trip from China with a valuable cargo of tea and spices, Captain Salisbury's ship ran into a hurricane. It was a real blow and the masts were carried away. All looked dark until, with Yankee ingenuity, Captain Salisbury raised a jury-rig and, under this bit of sail, limped home. Brown and Ives had given the ship up for lost. Imagine their delight when, one morning, she was sighted down the bay. Just at this time there was a shortage of tea in this country and the cargo was worth thousands of dollars. The insurance company, in gratitude, presented the Captain with a handsome silver tea service inscribed to honor the occasion.

Captain Salisbury, like many old sea captains, amassed a fortune and, again like so many others, lost most of it investing in business on land. He returned to the sea and took the ship "Roman" to Liverpool. However his good luck had run out on the sea as well as the land, for when only a day out from England his ship was rammed by the "Richard Anderson" and so badly damaged that all hands had to take to the lifeboats. The other ship took them aboard, but Captain Salisbury was severely injured and did not recover from the shock. He was buried at Liverpool, England, on March 15, 1840 — a very long way from the old house on King Street.

The last house on the south side of King Street was the Sands place. This stood three stories on the front and east end, with only two stories on the west and south, owing to the pitch of the hill. The house was painted white with green blinds and two tall elms stood like sentinels before it. In the basement rooms, Captain Sands' mother at one time ran a

small school. Prim little maids were taught their letters and how to count but mostly they sewed on patchwork.

After Mrs. Sands' teaching days were over, there came to live with the family an old friend, Samuel Pearce, with his two daughters, Delia and Hitty and an orphaned boy whom Mr. Pearce had adopted, named Jefferson Johnston. When Jefferson grew up, he fell in love with Delia and she with him, but to his horror he found that Hitty was also in love with him. What did he do? He married neither and things went along as they always had before. After Mr. Pearce's death, Jefferson took care of the "girls" as long as he lived. Finally, Hitty became demented and in her wildest spells would call for Jefferson to comfort her. When they were very old, Hitty died, but Jefferson and Delia never married.

At the west end of this house, set into the bank, was a long flight of stone steps which led to a brick courtyard over which was a flourishing grape arbor. In the corner of the yard was the well with a path leading from it to the back door on the south side of the house. The path led down a short flight of stairs to a wonderful old garden which was on the east side of the house. There were stately hollyhocks, larkspur, candy tuft and, growing in profusion, the favorite of our grandmothers, the bleeding heart.

In this nice old house lived Captain William Sands and his wife, Charlotte. The captain was a handsome man, tall, broad-shouldered and with a deep voice that could be heard above the roar of any tempest — a voice that demanded obedience. He was loved and respected by all who knew him, both on land and at sea. When he was ashore he always dressed in the finest fashion in handsome black broadcloth suits, made by a London tailor.

Captain Sands sailed for a New York firm and often owned large shares in the vessels he sailed. When his firm built the "Caravan", fastest ship of its day, they appointed William Sands as its captain. The "Caravan", a three masted barge with the first two masts being square-rigged, could outsail anything else afloat. Mrs. Sands, who often sailed with her hus-

band, was what Yankees call a forehanded woman. She would buy yards of English calico, long cloth, French silk, fine thread, barrels of sugar, molasses and chests of tea, and would store them under the stairs of her home for future use.

On a Saturday night in the spring of 1865, when the captain and his wife were away on a voyage, the small store at the top of the hill (now Sharpe's Hardware Store) caught fire. Bucket lines were formed to all nearby wells, but it was soon evident that the little store was doomed and that the Sands place was in danger. Some of the men carried boat hooks from the shipyard and fastened them to the ridge pole of the store and pulled it down. In spite of this, the Sands house did catch fire. As is usual at a big fire intense excitement prevailed but some few kept ther heads. While feather beds were being carried down the stairs and mirrors were carelessly thrown from windows, the beautiful sets of china were saved and much of the furniture, including the piano. No one knows what happened to Mrs. Sands' treasure trove beneath the stairs, but the captain's wine closet was found and many helped themselves, so that the fire turned out to be something of a gay party. One of these jolly souls found an enormous Chinese parasol and amused the crowd by parading up and down the high, narrow wall at the old Tibbitts Tavern, something he would never have attempted in his sober moments.

Henry Turner in his "Reminiscences of East Greenwich" seems to recall that the small store which stood on the site of Sharpe's was, at one time, the Fire Engine House. I have not been able to verify this fact.

And so, we reach the top of the hill at Main Street, the "Head of the Gutter" and turn to survey the whole of King Street. It has changed considerably but it is easy to imagine these people living there. It was the main artery of our town for many years, it is rich in history and deserving of a special mention in the history of East Greenwich.



VARNUM HOUSE — 1773

## CHAPTER VII

### *East Greenwich in the Revolutionary War*

No war in the history of our country touched this town as directly as did the Revolutionary War. The threat of attack was really here and the danger to civilian and military population was imminent. New England was a powder keg, needing only the lighting of a match to set off the explosion. Its location made East Greenwich very vulnerable to attack from the water and tension ran high at the beginning of the war. However, East Greenwich was vocally rebellious, patriotically American, and ready to do its part to attain freedom from English tyranny. On August 29, 1774, the following document was drawn up:



"Subscription for the Relief of the Inhabitants of Boston and Charlestown, in the Town of East Greenwich: We, the subscribers, inhabitants of the town of East Greenwich in the Colony of Rhode Island, taking into most serious consideration the present alarming situation of our brethren in the towns of Boston and Charlestown, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, occasioned by the late cruel, malignant and worse than savage acts of the British Parliament; and whereas a time submission to the first approaches of lawless power will undoubtedly involve this extensive continent in one scene of misery and servitude, than which, a glorious death, in defence of our unquestionable rights is far more eligible; convinced likewise, that the only true glory and unfading grandeur of the British Monarch consists in governing his empire with equal and impartial laws, founded in reason and rendered sacred by the wisdom of ages; and that every attempt to impair that noble constitution, which hath ever been the envy and terror of Europe, constitutes the blackest treason—from the most earnest abhorance to the deep-laid schemes of his prime minister, whom we esteem the most determined foe to royalty; and from our love to our country, which nothing but death can abate, we do promise and engage to pay by the first day of October next, the respective sums to our name annexed, to James Mitchell Varnum, Esq., Messers A. Mumford, Preserved Pearce and William Pearce, to be laid out and expended in such articles of provisions, for our distressed brethren, as the majority of us shall agree upon to be sent to the committee of ways and means for employing the poor in Boston, by the first conveyance."

The arguments at Arnold's Tavern must have been long and loud as feeling ran high. Tories were in the minority and were most unpopular with their fellow townsmen. A letter dated September 10, 1774, gives an idea of their feeling: "On Wednesday evening, Sept. 9, 1774, the people of East Greenwich met to the number of five or six hundred and had Samuel Hunt and Sylvester Sweet, Esq. before them and made them renounce their pernicious Tory principles (which they had been industrious in propagating) and promise for the future to support the liberties of the country to the last extremity."

The leading Tory in this area was Stephen Arnold of Warwick. He was a man of some eminence hereabout and was one of the judges in the Court of Common Pleas for Kent

County. His violent and emphatic opinions angered the people of East Greenwich into action. On a September night in 1774, irate citizens hanged Judge Arnold in effigy on the north end of Rope Walk Hill, just to the right of King Street, going toward the shore.

Arnold was, understandably, insulted by this public manifestation of resentment and called some hundred of his friends together and threatened to attack the town in retaliation. The plan to meet at the west end of East Greenwich, near Howland Road, was a secret which leaked out. One of the Frenchtown Tillinghasts who had some Tory leanings was told of the scheme, but proved his town loyalty by warning the inhabitants of their danger. Peggy Pearce, who kept a shop on Main Street, was our own eighteenth century Mata Hari. She was a shrewd, observant woman and was in the habit of trading with the wives of farmers in Judge Arnold's domain. She rode on horseback into enemy territory to ascertain the truth of Mr. Tillinghast's information. By chatting with the farm women, she found that the report was indeed true and that the attack was scheduled for the next night.

Sam Brown, a local barber, was dispatched to Providence for military assistance. The legend is that he rode at night, bareback, and reached Providence in forty minutes; kept the horse moving while soldiers were mustered and then rode him home without permanent injury to the horse! Light infantry and cadets arrived in town at nine o'clock in the morning and were given their breakfast at temporary tables set up for the purpose in the middle of the street, between the tavern of William Arnold and the house of Richard Mathewson. Women of the town served beef and pork which had been boiled in huge cauldrons.

Arnold's men, on arriving at the rendezvous that evening, learned that their plans had been discovered. Arnold and others were captured while scouting the area, and an apology was demanded of the Tory leader. After the apology, the large, improvised army led by Judge Arnold decided that a peace celebration was in order. But as they came near the

town a loaded cannon, which had been planted strategically in case of need, was almost fired into the crowd. Some sore-head had seized the burning brand and was about to touch off the powder when Silas Casey's negro man, Wat, threw himself across the breech and prevented a calamity. Dr. James H. Eldredge, in his memoirs, credits this account of the Arnold riot to good authority.

Thus, East Greenwich was set for trouble. In the town records, dated January 16, 1775 we read: "That the association entered into by the Continental Congress at Philadelphia the 5th day of September, 1774, be strictly obeyed and faithfully kept up by the inhabitants of this Town." A miniature cradle of liberty was our East Greenwich!

Realizing the imminence of war and the danger to the community, fifty-four men, under the leadership of Nathanael Greene and James M. Varnum, met at the Arnold Tavern in September, 1774. They formed the Kentish Guards, a military group to protect the locality from British attack. They selected Varnum as their commander and were drilled and instructed on the village green, as hundreds of other young New Englanders were at that same time.

When the news of the Battle of Lexington reached here in 1775, the Kentish Guards, one hundred and ten strong, were ready to march. When they reached Pawtucket, they met a rider who told them that they were not needed, as the enemy had retreated and all was quiet. So they returned to give their support and protection to East Greenwich.

The Kentish Guards built, at their own expense and labor, a fort on the bluff at the north end of land which was owned for many years by the Rhodes family. No trace of the fort, called Fort Daniel, now remains. It was strategically placed directly opposite Long Point to guard the entrance to the bay. The fort consisted of earthworks, punctured here and there with holes large enough for cannons to be poked through. Nine cannons were manned here and a local watch system was set up by a committee consisting of Richard Mathewson, Thomas Tillinghast, Isaac Johnson, Oliver Ar-

nold, William Sweet, Jr., Robert Vaughn, and Edmund Andrews. They compiled a list of residents able to keep watch and posted the list in town. Anyone caught napping while on guard was fined three shillings and the same fine was levied if they failed to report for duty.

Every house in Greenwich was searched for weapons or powder. If owners could not afford to donate their guns to the cause, the town reimbursed them. In February, 1776, John Glazier was appointed captain of the East Greenwich artillery company. Glazier was a carpenter and built gun carriages for the Colony at his shop, which was situated near where the Yacht Club now stands.

Another interesting but little known development at this time was the organization of a Rhode Island Negro regiment. We know that colored slaves from this section served in the Black Regiment, which was raised through the efforts of General Varnum. In 1777, he proposed to General Washington that a battalion of slaves could be raised in Rhode Island. He suggested that Col. Christopher Greene, Col. Jeremiah Olney and Col. Samuel Ward, Jr., be sent home to enlist such a company and, in 1778, the General Assembly of Rhode Island passed a law permitting slaves to join the army. They had to be purchased from their owners at a price not exceeding one hundred and twenty pounds for the most valuable slave.

As reward for enlisting, a slave was promised: "all the Bounties, Wages and Encouragement allowed by the Continental Congress" to any other soldier. For the slave, the major inducement was the prospect of freedom, as the law plainly stated that he "would be immediately discharged from the service of his master or mistress and be (made) absolutely free—as if he had never been encumbered with servitude or slavery."

Among those who served in the Black Regiment from this area were: Titus Peirce, Nat Wickes, Thomas Nichols, Pero Greene, Jack Greene, Cyrus Mawney and Cato Greene. They all bear the surnames of the families who owned them. They fought at the battles of Rhode Island, Red Bank, Yorktown



and Fort Oswego, acquitting themselves creditably. At the siege of Newport this newly organized regiment under Col. Christopher Greene distinguished itself by desperate valor, repelling three consecutive furious onslaughts by Hessian troops.

In September, 1776, East Greenwich was called on to raise eighteen men in defense of Newport, which was in grave danger from the enemy. A committee procured blankets, knapsacks, and wooden canteens for "sojers now Raising to March to Newport". In November, sixteen more men were assigned to Newport but efforts to defend the key city of Rhode Island were of no avail. In December, 1776, the British fleet, comprising four frigates, a number of transports, and five thousand troops, took Newport in the name of George the Third of England.

This development put East Greenwich in a very dangerous position and its vulnerability was greatly increased. The Kentish Guards were now manning Fort Daniel continuously and almost every night the skies glowed red across the bay — around Quidnessett Neck on this side of the bay, as the homes of patriots were ransacked and burned by British soldiers.

After the taking of Newport by the British, scores of refugees poured into East Greenwich and became somewhat of a burden to townspeople. Supplies were limited even before the influx of newcomers, causing the town fathers to panic and, in August, 1777, vote that "No inhabitant of the towns of Newport or Jamestown, now residing here have any part of the flower [flour] now apportioned to this town". It is to their credit that this selfish vote was recinded at the next meeting.

Several times at this period of the war there was action off-shore. Col. Fry was in command of Fort Daniel when an enemy vessel was driven ashore one night. He took a troop of Kentish Guards, rowed across the bay, landed at Warwick Neck, and after exchanging fire with the ship for several hours, drove off the crew and captured the vessel. In another engagement the Guards were called to Prudence Island where,

with a small force of eighty men, they chased two hundred and fifty British soldiers from the island.

In 1778, General Washington sent two regiments, combining them with troops from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and half of all the militia in Rhode Island, to re-capture the city of Newport. At this time, William Greene of Greene Farm, Division Street was Governor of the state, and his home became headquarters for the planning of the campaign. General Sullivan was named commander, General Nathanael Greene, his aide, and General James Varnum was put in command of one of the regiments. The French fleet, under Count D'Estaing, had arrived to support the troops, but bad weather did considerable damage to the fleet and they had to send some vessels to Boston for repair. This delayed action caused much discouragement among the troops and some of the Kentish Guards returned home in disgust.

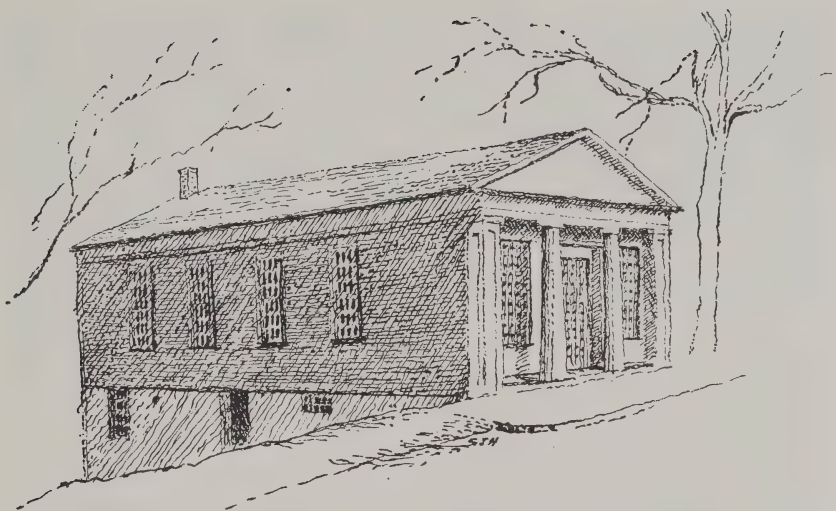
On August 26, 1778, the Battle of Rhode Island began and many East Greenwich men were there to take part in the assault. However, it was not until October, 1778, that the British finally evacuated Newport and East Greenwich was able to relax its vigil. Meantime militia was ordered out again, Connecticut sent one thousand soldiers to be billeted in East Greenwich, and for several days the town was a veritable military camp. But the British ships withdrew and Rhode Island never saw them again.

East Greenwich was, without doubt, a stronghold of patriots, with a very small number of loyalists. Some, who held office from the Crown, held out strongly for the King until war actually broke out and then, having civic pride and being Americans, they joined the patriots in defending their homes. Others, not so honest, broke into the barn of Governor Greene and stole sugar stored there for the use of the Continental Army. Another so-called citizen got the idea of cutting whole blankets in two and charging the Colony for two blankets. This person may have profited financially from the deal, but to the day of his death he was known, contemptuously, as "Split-Blanket" Greene. Double dealing with both American

and British for personal profit was not unusual and some men of yesterday, as those of today, profited by war.

For the most part, East Greenwich was united in the cause of freedom. In the long list of veterans of the Revolutionary War, in the part played by the Kentish Guards, and in the individual soldiers who attained national fame and immortality by their deeds, the town may be justly proud.

When, in 1781, news of the surrender of Cornwallis reached the town, joy and relief were the predominant emotions. The village of East Greenwich resumed its normal pursuits and its citizens faced the future as free men of a new nation.



KENTISH GUARD ARMORY — 1842

## CHAPTER VIII

### *The Kentish Guards*

The feeling of restlessness which pervaded the country, and particularly New England, in 1774, was felt very strongly in East Greenwich. On Saturday, September 2, 1774, fifty-four men of Kent County met at the tavern of William Arnold on Main Street and formed a compact which was worded as follows:

“Deeply impressed with a sense of the shameful neglect of military exercise, and being willing and desirous to repair and revive that decayed and necessary spirit of regular discipline at this alarming crisis, we, the subscribers, do unanimously join to establish a military independent company. That on every Tuesday and Saturday, in the afternoon, for the future, or as long as occasion requires, or should be judged necessary or expedient, we will meet at the house of William Arnold in East Greenwich for purposes aforesaid.”

The men signing this compact formed the nucleus of the Kentish Guards when, in October, 1774, the organization was



approved and incorporated by the General Assembly of the Colony of Rhode Island and the group became part of the state militia from its inception. The men who signed the compact at the Arnold Tavern are here noted in the order of their signing: Adam Comstock, Job Hawkins, Gideon Mumford, Richard Mathewson, Nathanael Greene, James Searle, William Arnold, Augustus Mumford, John Reynolds, Gideon Freeborn, Joseph Jocelyn, John S. Dexter, Charles Holden, Jr., Job Peirce, John Glazier, Richard Fry, Thomas Holden, Stephen Mumford, Charles Greene, Andrew Boyd, Samuel Brown, Nathanael Greene (Coventry) Ezel Wall, Joseph Whitman, Abiel Brown, Wanton Casey, Hopkins Cooke, Christopher Greene, Griffin Greene, John Cooke, Job Rice, John Gorton, John Greene, s. of Richard, Reuben Wightman, William Waterman, John Fry, Oliver Gardiner, Clark Brown, Benj. Spencer, Stephen Greene, Christopher Greene, Isaac Tripp, Jr., Dutee Jerauld, Jr., Peleg Olin, Pardon Allen, John Shaw, Jr., Samuel Rouse, Abraham Greene, Thomas Arnold and Joseph Greene.

Many of these surnames are very familiar, even now, in Rhode Island. You will find that some of them have ancestors on the list of original settlers of this, and nearby, towns. Some of the names are no longer heard in this area, but most of them have descendants in and around Kent County.

Very soon after this group was formed, young Nathanael Greene of Coventry went to Boston supposedly on a business trip. Nathanael, who was in his early thirties at this time, had other reasons, beside business, for going to Boston. His real intent was to see for himself what the situation was in the Massachusetts city. He listened to men talk on the streets and in the taverns. He observed the British troops drilling on the Common and realized that war was imminent.

From a deserter, Nathanael obtained a British musket, a much coveted possession which many New Englanders would desire, but which the British would not allow them to own. He then prevailed on a drill-master of the British forces to return to Rhode Island with him. This man, who called him-

self Sergeant Box (although his name is said to have been Johnson) came to East Greenwich by one route, Nathanael Greene by another and the prized musket by still another route, concealed in a load of hay. Thus did the three arrive safely in town and the drilling of the Kentish Guards began. The sergeant from Boston was an excellent drill-master and in a few weeks had a fine soldierly group well trained. It might be noted here that the musket is still a valued possession of the Greene family at Potowomut.

Nathanael Greene had a slight limp from an injury received while working at the forge, and so was relegated to the ranks as a private. In view of his labor and initiative in establishing the Kentish Guards, it was indeed a disappointment to him and to his friends, especially to James M. Varnum, who was chosen as the first Captain of the Guards. Richard Fry was First Lieutenant, Christopher Greene was Second Lieutenant, and Hopkins Cooke was Ensign.

In the days before actual war was declared, it was necessary that the uniform of the Kentish Guards resemble that of the British Colonial troops as nearly as possible. The first uniform, of necessity, had red coat and trousers. The coat was faced with green. The men wore a black stock, black leggings and black cocked hat. After the war, in 1797, they blossomed out with a very fancy uniform consisting of "round black hat with visor, black plume with a red tip eight inches above the top of the hat, white cravat, black leather collar impressed with military insignia, white waistcoat, blue woolen coat and pantaloons. The coat was faced with scarlet and white, trimmed with gold cord and ornamented with a double row of gilt buttons, trimmed with gold cord and with red morocco bands around the top, one and a quarter inches wide, black shoes, scarlet canteen (flat sides) with name Kentish Guards and an eagle painted white on one side, with scarlet strap, scarlet knapsack with name Kentish Guards in white on black background. Officers were equipped with spontoon and sword." This description is taken verbatim from an old history of the Kentish Guards. They certainly must have been eye-catching, to say the least! The uniform was changed in 1820

and again in 1830. Now the uniform, adopted in the 1920's, is not quite so colorful, but much less gaudy and cumbersome. It consists of: trousers and coat of Kentish blue, red and white buttons on the coat inscribed K G 1774, black gaiters, military hat with red and blue plume. This uniform is a replica of those worn by members of the United States Army in 1790.

During the Revolutionary War the Kentish Guards served admirably in this state. They erected Fort Daniel on a bluff overlooking East Greenwich harbor and manned it throughout the war. They participated in battles at Prudence Island in January and August, 1776. They were at Warwick Neck in April, 1776, and were stationed at Greene's Old Stone Castle there. In October and November of that same year they were on the Island of Rhode Island and, during December, 1776, and January, 1777, they were on active field service at Newport, Warren, Bristol and Tiverton. During this last assignment they were in a regiment composed of independent military companies in command of their own leader, Col. Richard Fry. In July, 1778, they were a part of the Sullivan Expedition at Tiverton.

So, from 1776 until 1781, the Guards served without interruption, doing garrison duty and field service at home and away from home. They were well disciplined, fully armed, and well equipped. In his "Life of George Washington", Washington Irving, in speaking of the encampment at Cambridge when Washington took command, July 2, 1775, says: "Washington observed that nine thousand of the troops belonged to Massachusetts; the rest were from other provinces. They were encamped in separate bodies, each with its own regulations and officers of its own appointment. Some had tents, others were in barracks, and others sheltered themselves as best they might. Many were sadly in want of clothing, and all were strongly imbued with the spirit of insubordination, which they mistook for independence. One of the encampments, however, was in striking contrast with the rest, and might vie with those of the British for order and exactness. Here were tents and marquees pitched in the English style; soldiers well drilled and well equipped; everything had an air of discipline and

subordination. It was a body of Rhode Island troops, which had been raised, drilled and brought to the camp by Brigadier-General Greene, of that province". Shades of a musket buried in a load of hay, of Drill-Sergeant Box and the far-sighted Nathanael Greene!

This was indeed a tribute and the final result of Kentish Guard training. One of the crack regiments was commanded by General Varnum, others by Major Ebenezer Flagg, Captains Archibald Crary, Thomas Holden and Thomas Arnold. John Singer Dexter and John Reynolds, both members of the Kentish Guards, were lieutenants and four staff officers of the Revolutionary War were also Guards: Quartermaster Clarke Brown, Adjutant Augustus Mumford, Paymaster Griffin Greene, and Surgeon Joseph Jocelyn. Augustus Mumford of Varnum's Brigade was the first Rhode Islander to be killed in action. He died in the defense of Boston, at Plowed Hill on August 28, 1775.

The Kentish Guards furnished more officers to the Continental Army than any other chartered command in the country: thirty-five in all, including one major-general, one brigadier-general, two colonels, one major and four captains, as well as many equally fine soldiers of lesser rank.

From the end of the Revolutionary War to 1812, the Kentish Guards met each Fourth of July at Colonel Arnold's Tavern and listened to an oration delivered by prominent speakers of the times, such as: General Varnum, Col. Ray Greene, Jacob Campbell, Abner Alden, Dr. Peter Turner, Nathan Whiting and Rev. Daniel Waldo.

The Guards conducted themselves with honor, not only in the Revolution, but in the wars that followed. In the War of 1812, the company under the command of Col. Henry C. Turner, was stationed at Newport. During the Dorr War, in 1842, the company under the command of Col. W. T. Allen defended the state arsenal from attack and were presented with a silk regimental flag from the State of Rhode Island in recognition of this service.



When Abraham Lincoln, in 1861, called for volunteers, the Kentish Guards marched to Providence and reported to Governor Sprague. On June 5th, the first company was mustered into service as Company H, 2nd R. I. Volunteers. Later a second company was formed and called Company H, 7th R. I. Volunteers.

Since 1869, the town of East Greenwich has observed Memorial day with a military parade, as colorful and exciting as any in the state. The Kentish Guards add the flavor of history and fine tradition to these parades. The Kentish Guards band, now under the direction of William Barrows, provides the martial music for the occasion. This band also offers free concerts to the townspeople during the summer months.

In 1898, during the Spanish-American War, eighteen members of the Guards served their country and over one hundred and sixty members saw service in World War I. Three were killed in battle: Walter Ray Allen, Richard F. Grant, and Charles L. Lorensen. Jesse Whaley was blinded in battle. In World War II, members of the Kentish Guards served individually and upheld the fine reputation of that group.

The Armory, at the corner of Armory and Peirce Streets, was built soon after the Dorr War. Guards meet and drill there each Tuesday night and are still part of the State Militia. They have the distinction of being the fifth oldest chartered command in continuous existence in the United States. The oldest is the Ancient and Honorables of Boston, Massachusetts; second, the First Cadet Corp, also of Boston; third, Newport Artillery, Newport, Rhode Island; the fourth, the Governor's Foot Guard of Hartford, Connecticut; and fifth, our own Kentish Guards of East Greenwich.

Colonel Thomas Casey Greene is an active member of the Kentish Guards and has served as commanding officer for several terms. He is a direct descendant of two of the original organizers: Christopher Greene and Wanton Casey and a

lateral descendant of General Nathanael Greene. Colonel Greene lives at "The Forge" the birthplace of General Greene and his home for the first twenty-seven years of his life.

During the last few years the Guards have been under the command of Col. George R. Hathaway, Dr. Benjamin F. Tefft and the present commander, Col. James W. Tingley, Jr.

So this fine military organization preserves the tradition of our soldier forefathers. They are today, as always, a well turned-out military outfit; a credit to the State Militia, to their famous members Generals Greene and Varnum, and to the old town of East Greenwich.

### NATHANAEL GREENE

No person in this area achieved such national eminence as did Nathanael Greene. Learned historians and armchair generals alike have appreciated the military genius of this Rhode Islander, whose name is synonymous with the Revolutionary War and national liberty.

Nathanael Greene was born at Potowomut, Warwick, Rhode Island on August 7, 1742 (New Style), the son of Nathanael and Mary (Mott) Greene. Nathanael, Senior, a man of solemn mien and stern character, was a Quaker preacher. He, with his five brothers, owned a forge, grist mill and saw mill at Potowomut. Thus he was comfortably situated to help his own eight sons. Young Nathanael, the second son, was a lively sociable boy, who often disagreed with the stern edicts of his father. In later years Nathanael wrote that his father was "a man of great piety, of excellent understanding and governed in his conduct by humanity and kind benevolence, but his mind was overshadowed by prejudice against literary accomplishment." Young Nathanael lamented his lack of a liberal education but acquired knowledge by reading every book available to him. A chance meeting in a Boston book store with Dr. Ezra Stiles, later president of Yale University, led to a life-long friendship. Dr. Stiles was pleased to guide young Greene in his choice of reading material as his thirst for knowledge was unquenchable. He had some tutoring by a

local teacher, Master Adam Maxwell, but he was, for the most part a self-educated man.

Nathanael worked at the Forge at Potowomut until he was twenty-seven years old. It was at the forge that he had the accident which caused him to limp for his lifetime. In 1770, his father gave him charge of the forge and mill at Coventry, Rhode Island. Here it was, in 1774, that he built his home and brought his lovely bride, Catharine Littlefield. This house has been preserved as a museum by the General Nathanael Greene Homestead Association.

Because he marched in a military parade in Plainfield, Connecticut, Nathanael was "read out of meeting" by the Friends and so denied his Quaker heritage. He read the handwriting on the wall and realized that war was inevitable. His duty to fight for freedom was stronger than his Quaker belief. In 1774, he and his friend, James Mitchell Varnum, organized the Kentish Guards at a meeting at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern on Main Street. Because of his lameness, the men, much to the disappointment of Varnum as well as Greene, named James M. Varnum as their first leader.

The Colony of Rhode Island, however, recognized the potential leadership of young Greene and, in 1775, named him as Brigadier-General in command of the Army of Observation. Thus was a great military career launched. He was thirty-three years old at this time, and from that day until 1783 was on active duty.

General Greene distinguished himself at the battles of Harlem Heights, Princeton, Brandywine and Germantown. In 1778, he accepted the office of Quartermaster-General of the United States. This office he filled until 1780, at which time General Washington commended him: "That the States have in you, in my opinion, an able, upright and diligent servant." Soon afterward he was back in the thick of the fighting at the Battle of Springfield, where he, with a small body of militia and two brigades, turned back five thousand British regulars in a brilliantly planned battle.

In October, 1780, General Greene was made commander of the Southern Army which, at that time, was in a sorry state of disorganization and despair. Then began the great campaign which won for him immortality in American history. He master-minded the battles of Cowpens, Guildford Court House, Hobkirk's Hill and Eutaw Springs. His clever military strategy, although it meant defeat at Guilford and Hobkirk's Hill, so weakened the British forces that it spelled their final defeat. The South was grateful to this young general and gave him land in Georgia, where he lived out the last years of his life, dying at Mulberry Grove in 1786.

In 1780 he returned to Greenwich for a short time and the town welcomed him with the following letter, a copy of which may be seen at the East Greenwich Free Library:

"The Citizens of the Town of East Greenwich by leave to meet you, at the happy moment of your Return from the Field of Glory with all the Joy that affectionate Hearts can feel, and with more satisfaction than their language can express. They recount, with greatest Felicity the pleasing Hours, in which many of them, with you, first assayed from the purest Principles of Liberty, the military Science. They then respected the important Events which have since rescued this Country from the Oppression of Great Britain, and they now feel their Happiness increased, that in obtaining the inestimable Object of their Wishes, you have invariably deserved the Sublime character which Time itself must leave unsullied. They are anxious, Sir, to be considered in the number of your warmest Friends and cannot be more happy in your future Prosperity.

We have the Honor of being Sir, in behalf of the Town, with unfeigned Regard, your sincere Friends and most humble Servants."

East Greenwich  
26th Dec. 1780

J. M. Varnum  
A. Cray  
T. Tillinghast

Pride, respect and admiration are all expressed in this letter; the years have but enhanced the evaluation. Today we are still proud, respectful and admiring of our Potowomut neighbor, General Nathanael Greene.



## GENERAL JAMES MITCHELL VARNUM

In the person of James Mitchell Varnum, East Greenwich has another claim to national fame in the Revolutionary War. James Varnum was born in Dracut, Massachusetts, on December 17, 1748, the son of Major Samuel Varnum. He entered Harvard University in 1765, but did not finish his education there. He taught school for a while in Dracut, and in May, 1768, entered Rhode Island College (now Brown University). He graduated with honors in the first senior class at the University in 1769. After graduation he taught again, but soon returned to Rhode Island as a law student in the office of Oliver Arnold, who was then Attorney-General of the Colony of Rhode Island.

In February, 1770, James Varnum married Martha (Patty) Child, daughter of Cromwell Child of Warren. In 1771 he was admitted to the Rhode Island Bar and decided to settle in East Greenwich. In 1773 he built a handsome colonial mansion on the hill overlooking the bay. He was a brilliant lawyer, an avid reader and a man of cultivated taste. He could recite, with ease, Shakespeare, Pope, and Addison, and loved to do so. But he was far from the sedentary type, as he was athletic and loved games or tests of strength. He was a handsome, charming, personable young man, who endeared himself to all who knew him.

A student of military affairs and tactics, he was one of the first men hereabouts to realize that war with England was inevitable, and in 1774 he became a charter member of the Kentish Guards. His friendship with Nathanael Greene lasted their lifetimes and, without doubt, his eloquence swayed many to the cause of liberty. In 1775, when the news of the Battle of Lexington reached East Greenwich, it was Varnum who led the Kentish Guards to Providence to offer their services. In 1775, James M. Varnum was commissioned as Colonel of the First Regiment, Rhode Island Infantry. After the fifth of August of that year, the regiment was known as the Twelfth Continental Foot. This brigade, under the command of Colonel Varnum, took part in the defense of

Boston. Later the brigade was on garrison duty at Fort Box in Brooklyn and it was in action at Brooklyn Heights and Long Island.

In 1776, Col. Varnum returned to Rhode Island, and the General Assembly appointed him Brigadier-General of the State Militia. He relinquished his regimental commission to accept the assignment. He was on duty the next few months in Tiverton, Providence, South Kingstown and Exeter. He was appointed Brigadier-General of the Continental Army in 1777 and on the first of June the two Rhode Island Regiments, under General Varnum, marched to Peekskill, New York. In November he was ordered by Washington to take over the supervision of Forts Mercer, Mifflin, and Red Bank.

On December 19, 1777, General Varnum proceeded, with his brigade, to Valley Forge, and the trials and sufferings of the men during those winter months went down in history. Varnum's aggressive, and yet persuasive, manner was put to good use in appealing for aid for the Continental Army. On the famous battle site at Valley Forge today you will find the headquarters of General James M. Varnum.

The General returned to Rhode Island in August, 1778, to prepare for the campaign before Newport. His command bore the brunt of the fighting in the Battle of Rhode Island and acquitted themselves most admirably.

In 1779, General Varnum resigned his commission and returned to East Greenwich to resume his law practice. In October he was appointed Advocate of the State Court of Admiralty. He was a brilliant lawyer and one of the greatest orators of his day. His cases are famous in the annals of the law and one of the most notable was the paper money case of *Trevett vs. Weeden*, wherein he represented the defendant and won national applause in 1786. Thomas Paine, well-known pamphleteer of the period, met a Rhode Island lawyer and inquired for General Varnum, saying that he had, on many occasions, listened to him as a public speaker with great delight. Paine said that he had heard many of the best orators of America and Europe and that, in point of charming

elocation, James Mitchell Varnum was the most eloquent man he had ever heard. He thought it strange that his name had not attained more celebrity.

In 1787, President Washington named General Varnum as one of the directors of the Ohio Company of Associates. This was a pet project of the President's to open up the Northwest Territory to settlement. Right after that time, General Varnum was appointed one of the United States judges for the territory, an appointment which he accepted.

In the spring of 1788, General Varnum, accompanied by Griffin Greene, journeyed on horseback through the forests to Marietta, Ohio. The trip was a rugged one through eight hundred miles of rough country, and it proved too much for the General, who had already endured the rigors of war. On January 1, 1789, scarcely seven months after his arrival, he died in Marietta.

At his death, General Varnum was only forty years of age, but he had accomplished much in those four decades. He graduated from college at twenty, was admitted to the bar two years later, entered the army at twenty-seven, was a Brigadier-General at twenty-eight and a territorial judge at thirty-nine. James Mitchell Varnum amassed no great fortune, but carved his name in the record of American history and in the hearts and minds of the people of East Greenwich.

#### THE VARNUM CONTINENTALS

In 1907, a patriotic and military society was incorporated under Rhode Island law "to perpetuate the customs, uniform and traditions of the American Revolution, and thereby to aid in other ways to encourage patriotism among people".

Meticulously, the Varnum Continentals have reproduced and wear the exact uniform worn by the Rhode Island troops in the Revolution and they carry the colors which are copies of the first American and first Rhode Island flags. The uniforms of buff and blue, with black tricorne hats and black leggings, are colorful and lend to our parades an authenticity that is commendable.

The Varnum Armory, built in 1914, serves as headquarters for the group and its military museum is excellent. The Varnum Continentals were instrumental in the formation of the Coast Artillery Battery, known as Battery I, 243rd, and they also sponsor a crack rifle team.

The first commander of the Varnum Continentals was Nathaniel Brown, whose ancestor, Clarke Brown, was an officer in the Revolutionary War. William Owens was the second commander. In 1914 he was succeeded by Colonel Howard V. Allen who still serves today.





GOVERNOR WM. GREENE HOUSE — 1680

## CHAPTER IX

### *Some Old Houses*

The preservation of old houses in small New England towns is, too often, a lost cause. East Greenwich has sacrificed some of them to time and others to so-called renovation, which destroyed original lines and doomed them to mediocrity. But there are, thanks to family pride and interested citizens, a few gems of the past to offset some of the monstrosities of the present.

#### THE GOVERNOR GREENE FARM

Outstanding among the old houses in this area is the Governor Greene place on the corner of Division Street and Love Lane. On the original Warwick plat this farm was assigned to Samuel Gorton. It was inherited, at his death in 1677, by his son, Samuel Gorton, Jr., who, in 1680, built the original farmhouse consisting of two rooms on the first floor

and two on the second. These rooms were built against a large stone chimney which made up the entire west end of the house. In 1718, it was purchased by Captain Samuel Greene, who died before taking possession, the property then going to his son, William Greene. William was married to Catherine Greene and served as Governor of Rhode Island from 1743 to 1758. As the years went on, rooms were added as needed and the house assumed the proportions of a comfortable manor house.

William Greene, Jr., who inherited the house in 1758, had recently been married to Catharine Ray. He was a prominent citizen of the state and was active in public affairs of both state and nation. He served as governor of Rhode Island from 1778 to 1785. The friendship of Governor and Mrs. Greene with Benjamin Franklin is well-known. He visited the farm often.

The interior of the house is a poem in period furniture.. Lovely old pieces with the patina of age meet the eye in every room. The fireplace in the room to the right of the entrance hall is huge, with a crane and kettles hanging as in years gone by. The Blue Room of the southwest side of the house is cheery and bright. Here it was that Elder Gorton married Nathanael Greene to Catharine Littlefield in 1774, when it was the home of Kitty's aunt, Mrs. William Greene. Two of the bedrooms on the second floor have handsome high-posters with canopies. The stairway leading upstairs with its S-shaped balusters is an architectural gem. Throughout the house there is an air of timelessness and a feeling of kinship with its former occupants.

The old house echoes the voices of such eminent visitors as Generals Lafayette, Rochambeau and Sullivan. Here councils and assemblies met to decide matters during the trying days of the Revolutionary War. As the years rolled by, the Greene family, from generation to generation, inherited and maintained the ancestral home. At the death of Governor William Greene, in 1809, the next generation, in the person of Ray Greene, took possession of the house. Mr.

Greene lived there until he died in 1849. He served as United States Senator from Rhode Island from 1797 to 1801. He married Mary Magdalen Flagg in 1794.

The Honorable William Greene, the third of his name and the fifth in line of ownership in the Greene family, lived at the farm only periodically for forty-five years, his residence being in Cincinnati, Ohio. In later years, however, he returned to the home of his birth and spent the remainder of his life there. He married Abigail Lyman in 1821. From 1866 to 1867 he served as Deputy-Governor of Rhode Island. Under his supervision the house and grounds were developed to their full potential. Preserving the charm of the old and adding the comfort of the new, Governor Greene made his home a place of beauty, as well as a model of antiquity. He spent the last nineteen years of his life here and, at his death in 1883, the house passed to his grandson, William Greene Roelker, who was married to Eleanor Jencks.

William Greene Roelker, Jr. inherited the house from his father and lived there the greater part of his life. He was a distinguished historian and author. His efficient organization of historical affairs is well-known and, as director of the Rhode Island Historical Society, he did much to advance the work of that organization. Mr. Roelker died in May, 1953. The Governor Greene Farm, in possession of his family, stands as an historical monument to an illustrious and civic-minded family. They are still there for, on the grounds of the farm, situated on a knoll just north of the house, lie ten generations of Greenes in a beautifully tended little burial ground.

While we are at the Greene Farm it might be well to mention that here, too, is the oldest garden in the East Greenwich area. The old part of the garden was planted in 1720 by the wife of the first William Greene. It was the second of that name, the former Catharine Ray of Block Island, who set out the formal garden and had the land terraced. This was done about 1758 when the house was enlarged at her request.

The oldest feature of this garden is a walk originating with the path that Samuel Gorton trod so forcefully while he

pondered his theories and composed his fiery orations in defense of them. This walk was variously called Gorton's Walk, Long Walk and, in more recent years when Longfellow strolled there with the Greenes, Poet's Walk. The walk runs north from the house and is bordered with thick shrubs bearing white blossoms only — white lilac, snowball, mock orange, and bridal wreath, while in the spring the myrtles are thick in the grass around them. Much of the work on this path was planned and supervised by Magdalen Flagg Greene, who came here in 1794 from Charleston, South Carolina, as the bride of Ray Greene. In late years Mrs. Roelker has had pachysandra planted along the edge of the path leading to her own lovely greenery beyond.

Northeast of the house is the burial ground mentioned before. A wrought iron gate leads in from Love Lane, and the path to the burial place is an archway of rhododendron. In June when they are in bloom it is a breathtaking sight.

Illustrious feet have trod these garden paths — those of Samuel Gorton, the two Governor Greenes, Benjamin Franklin, General Nathanael Greene, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and probably many more, equally noteworthy. This lovely garden remains as a memorial to several generations of pioneers, soldiers, statesmen and writers.

#### THE CLEMENT WEAVER HOUSE

This house on Howland Road, built in 1679 by Clement Weaver, is the oldest house in East Greenwich. It has changed much in the two hundred and eighty years since it was built. Originally it was a one-room house, a story and one-half high. The walls were of wide board, placed vertically, and the chimney was made of fieldstone. Norman Isham, architectural authority, noted that the house had been added to, no less than four times. The first addition was made by building a lean-to against the chimney end of the house. Later, the lean-to was enlarged to make a room and another half-story above, thus making the house appear, as it does today, with the chimney in the center. The next addition was



another lean-to, built across the back of the house. The final addition was the ell, with its own stone chimney on the south part of the house. The stairway and entrance hall just inside the door of the Weaver House are typical of the period. In restoration, it was found that the original builders had used sea-weed for insulation.

The Weaver family lived in this house generation after generation, from 1679 to 1748, when it was purchased by Daniel Howland. He willed it to his son Daniel and his wife, Philadelphia. It remained in the Howland family until 1940, when it was purchased by Mr. G. Ellsworth Gale. Mr. Gale went to great lengths to restore the house. It was he who had Norman Isham and Edward Cull, noted architects, to direct the restoration. In early 1960 Mr. Gale sold the house to Richard Waterhouse, III.

Built only two years after the official founding of the town of East Greenwich, the Weaver House is an architectural show-place. Its restoration and preservation are particularly vital, because so few houses of that period were left standing after King Philip's War.

#### THE TIBBITTS HOUSE

A lesser known but authentically proved old house is the Tibbitts place in Frenchtown. It was built sometime before 1708, as Henry Tibbitts, in his will dated that year, gave to his son, John, "house and land where he now lives". Old Henry Tibbitts was born about 1640 and was living in Kings Town, Rhode Island, in 1663. He came to East Greenwich between 1690 and 1708 and built the homestead. This is a truly lovely old house and has lost none of its charm. It is located on Frenchtown Road, back from the highway on a lane lined with shrubs and, as you near the house, there are beautiful old-fashioned flower gardens on either side.

The house itself is a Cape Cod farmhouse, covered with wood shingles and weathered to a soft gray. It sits there as sturdy and as competent as the day it was built, some two

hundred and fifty years ago. The remarkable fact about this house is that the Tibbitts family have lived there through all the years to the present day. The first owner was, of course, Henry Tibbitts, who died in 1713. From that date until now, the house has gone from father to son or from brother to brother — all Tibbitts. The present owners are John Gifford Tibbitts and his son, Gifford C. Tibbitts. So, for nine generations, the Tibbitts family have worked the land, lived and loved in the snug little farmhouse built by old Henry back in 1708.

The inside of the house bears out the promise of the exterior. Such marks of antiquity as corner posts, wide floor boards, and low ceilings are much in evidence. There are four rooms downstairs and two up. The upstairs rooms have original windows with six panes in the top sash and nine in the bottom. Doors leading from one room to another are made of just two solid panels of wood. Even if there were no records to prove it, there would be no doubt as to the architectural period of this house.

Every piece of furniture in the house is a reminder of a previous resident. When Henry Tibbitts of the third generation died in 1779, he stated in his will: "I also give to my two daughters — half a dozen bannister back chairs" and these are still in the farmhouse in daily use. When the Tibbitts men married, their wives brought family treasures as part of their dowry; Tarbox, Shippee, Whitford, Whitehead, and Bailey family heirlooms are part of the charm of this old place. There are beautiful pink lustre china, old pewter, a Queen Anne or duck-foot, round maple table, a low four-poster bed and another table from the old Tibbitts Tavern, a massive brass kettle, a cider jug with a blue design, a ship's lantern that burned a candle, a handsome maple desk with reinforcing brackets of cherry wood that was once owned by Esther Whitford Tibbitts, and many lovely old things too numerous to mention.

There is no doubt that, inside and out, the Tibbitts homeplace is truly a house of memories.

## THE BROWNBREAD PLACE

On Middle Road, six-tenths of a mile west of South County Trail, is the Brownbread Place built in 1710. It has been changed little in two hundred and fifty years. Both inside and out, it is a treasure of its period. Like other houses of the times, it was built around the great chimney. The chimney has seven flues, accommodating five fireplaces and two large beehive ovens.

In the cellar are the original beams. They are trunks of chestnut trees, with some of the bark still on! These beams are not planed or hewn, as are other beams throughout the house. Here, too, is a fireplace — a mammoth one of fieldstone, nine feet wide and five feet high. The foundation of the house is also fieldstone, two feet in thickness. Through recent winds and hurricanes, this house stood firm and unyielding.

The master bedroom upstairs has wide floor boards and a barrelled ceiling, giving the effect of a ship's cabin. The massive front door has strap hinges and a curly bolt. On the first floor there is a room eighteen feet long and eight feet wide. The lovely paneling here is said to have come from the first Court House in East Greenwich. The fireplace in the living room is of brick, which must have come from Europe, as no brick was made hereabouts as early as 1710.

The grounds, too, are beautiful in their antiquity, with an ancient white mulberry tree, said to have been planted by the Huguenots. In summer the wistaria climbs the side of the old shingled house and a handsome box hedge leads to the front door, which faces south and is not visible from Middle Road.

The house was built by John Spencer. Tradition says that its name came from the fact that, on Saturday night, beans were cooked at the other Spencer house, called Lilac Cottage, and the brownbread was cooked here. The Spencer families suppered on alternate Saturday nights at the Lilac Cottage and the Brownbread Place.

Mr. and Mrs. Amos Hazard bought the house thirty years ago as a summer home. Since Mr. Hazard's death in 1950, Mrs. Hazard lives here year-round. The Hazards have done much to maintain the original appearance of the house, both inside and out, making it a truly fine example of the comfortable farmhouse of the period.

#### THE COGGESHALL HOUSE

Variously known as the Coggeshall House, the Wall House, and the Aaron Pierce House, this dwelling is situated on Pierce Road, a mile or so south of the center of the town. It was built by Joshua Coggeshall between 1704 and 1715. It has the distinction of being one of the oldest houses in East Greenwich.

The outstanding features are the pilastered chimney of fieldstone which serves the seven fireplaces within the house, the stone stairs to the cellar, and the sawed balusters, a characteristic of the houses in Newport at that period. This house was, at one time, a fine example of the architecture of the early eighteenth century, but the years have not been kind to it, so the fine lines are all but obliterated.

Joshua Coggeshall, the builder of the house, came here from Newport in 1704 and built the house for his family soon after that date. His daughter, Elizabeth, married Samuel Wall and they lived in the house, as did their son Samuel. The younger Samuel Wall married Hannah Spencer and their daughter, Hannah Wall, married Philip Pierce and so the house came by its three names: the Coggeshall-Wall-Pierce House. Samuel W. Pierce, son of Philip, married Caroline Sherman and their son, Aaron was the last of the line to live in the homestead. So, for 213 years, from about 1704 to 1917, generation after generation came into possession of old Joshua Coggeshall's house. Aaron Pierce died in 1917, leaving no near relatives, and the house went out of the family. It is now the property of John E. McKenna.

#### THE MILLER-CONGDON HOUSE

Situated on the corner of Peirce Street, facing Division Street, is the Miller-Congdon House. It nestles against the



side of the hill as if it had been there forever. It looks solid, neat, and certainly unmysterious, but its history has had two generations of East Greenwich historians at swords' point over the exact date it was built. On the chimney is the date 1711, and the architectural features inside the house seem to bear out this date. But officially, the date 1750 keeps creeping in. Miss Gertrude Arnold, who did extensive research to establish dates to be put on old houses at the time of the town's two hundred and fiftieth anniversary celebration, was firm on the 1750 date. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Allen, who lived there for many years, were equally sure of the 1711 date!

Record searching has unearthed little to settle the argument. Dr. James H. Eldredge in his diary recalls that James Miller lived there and had a silversmith shop at the rear of the house in the early part of the nineteenth century. Edward Field in his "Revolutionary Defenses of Rhode Island" says: "Nathan Miller of East Greenwich was an excellent bayonet maker and when he was drafted to serve his turn in the guard at Warwick Neck station, a general petition was sent from that town and adjacent parts of Warwick, praying that he might be excused from his duty, and the reason given was that his services were 'much wanted in the Country at present' to make these important articles of warfare. This petition was duly considered, and by order of General Spencer he was excused". This Nathan Miller was the father of James, and it is possible that he lived in this house as early as 1750. Before that, the history of the house is open to speculation. It is the opinion of the writer (which is just an opinion and cannot be proved) that this house was built by the descendants of Giles Peirce. They owned land all around the area and were here early enough to have built this house in 1711.

This is really a lovely old home, laid out like many houses of the early 1700's with a large fireplace in the living room, and iron cranes, pots and wooden peelers to add to its appeal. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Clapp, who own the house now, have painstakingly restored it to its original beauty and antiquity. It is a rambling house with rooms probably added, as needed, through the years.

In the 1850's the house was purchased from the widow of Daniel Miller, son of James, by Captain John Congdon. He was a sea-captain and trader, whose wife, Cynthia, often accompanied him on sea voyages. Capt. Congdon was the first to transport Arabian horses to Queen Victoria. It had been tried before, but the horses had not survived the trip; these did, and were a gift to the Queen from the Sultan of Muscat. The Sultan gave Capt. Congdon two Canton china jars, filled with rose-water. These jars are now a part of the exhibit at the Varnum House Museum. Mrs. Thomas Allen, who owned the Miller-Congdon House for many years, was the granddaughter of Capt. John.

Perhaps some day, someone will stumble on the papers or records to settle the exact date of the building of this old house.

#### THE BRICK HOUSE

This house has been the most intriguing from the standpoint of research, the reason being a statement of fact by a reputable historian which defies verification. It has been definitely established that the land on the southeast corner of Main and Long Streets was the lot drawn by George Vaughn at the meeting of the Proprietors in 1711. It was later sold to John Reynolds, who built the house in 1767, the first brick house in East Greenwich. Then, according to record, John Reynolds sold to Stephen de Blois of Newport in 1771. That brings us to the statement by Dr. Frederick Dennison, a man of the cloth and a reputable historian of Westerly who, in a paper on "The Israelites in Rhode Island", published in the Narragansett Historical Register in 1886 says: "He (Aaron Lopez) built in East Greenwich a two-storied gambrel-roofed brick house, with a store in one corner below. The edifice still standing (1882) on the corner of Main and Long Streets. This was probably one of his branch trading houses".

To my knowledge there is nothing to support this statement by Dr. Dennison. At the Town Hall there is no record of Aaron Lopez ever owning property in East Greenwich; he was a Newport resident and lived there with his family. Dr.

Daniel Goodwin, in a letter to Dr. Charles Phillips in 1922, repeats the statement of Dr. Dennison as fact. In spite of the lack of proof, it still seems plausible. Lopez, who owned a large fleet of ships, employed a number of men to help handle imported goods. This house could have been built for one of his traders or factors (perhaps Stephen de Blois) and deeded in that man's name because of the fact that Aaron Lopez was a Portuguese-Jew. John Reynolds built many houses in this area and may have been the builder for Lopez. I hope that someday Dr. Dennison will be vindicated.

The house has had a number of owners and is known locally as the Micah Whitmarsh House. Col. Whitmarsh, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, lived there for many years. Recently it has been the property of Dr. Charles Phillips, who has his office on the street floor.

This house is still a charming one and a perfect model of early Colonial brick architecture.

#### THE VARNUM HOUSE

An outstanding example of colonial architecture, the Varnum House stands on Peirce Street facing the bay. General James Mitchell Varnum, Revolutionary War general, purchased the land from John Peirce for ninety dollars and built his mansion there in 1773. He and his wife, Patty, lived there and entertained lavishly during the war years. Frequent visitors were Generals Lafayette and Sullivan.

Among others who have since owned the house are: Ethan Clarke, Revolutionary officer and president of the R. I. Central Bank; Chief Justice George A. Brayton of the R. I. Supreme Court; and Dr. William Shaw Bowen, noted physician and journalist.

In 1939 the Varnum Continentals purchased the house from A. Studley Hart, with a view to making it an historical museum. This was soon accomplished and has attracted visitors from all over the country. Col. Howard V. Allen, commander of the Varnum Continentals, conceived the idea and has been instrumental in its growth and development.

The house has changed little in the last two-hundred years with the exception of the ell which was added in the latter part of the nineteenth century. A spacious hall runs through the house from east to west. On the right as you enter, there is the dining room with handsome period furniture. Beyond is the kitchen, which has been restored in memory of Alice W. Butts Allen. The upstairs has a central hall like that on the lower floor. There are two bedrooms on each side. The southeast chamber, which overlooks the garden, was used by Lafayette on his visits to East Greenwich.

The house has two enormous chimneys and they take care of the fireplaces in each of the eight rooms. The woodwork and paneling throughout the house are exquisite and at the Jamestown Exposition in 1907 Stanford White, the noted architect, copied it for the Women's Building there.

Sitting high and proud, overlooking Narragansett Bay, the Varnum House is a handsome monument to an illustrious past.

#### THE DOCTOR ELDREDGE HOUSE

A fine colonial mansion is the Dr. Eldredge House on the southwest corner of Peirce and Division Streets. In February 1773, John Reynolds bought from Daniel Greene the land on this corner with the agreement that he would build a house there within the year or forfeit the deed. He erected the house that still stands and sold it, with bake-house and stable, to Nathan Greene in 1788. (This again bears out the theory that John Reynolds built houses to sell, as he did the Brick House). Nathan Greene had the first tannery in town in the back yard and had his shop in the basement on Peirce Street. It was probably he who had the "Hatter's Jet" effect arranged over the basement shop.

The house is square in appearance with a hip-gabled roof. The imposing doorway is in the center of the house and the numerous windows have the small panes common to the period. Blue tiled mantles with scriptural scenes, old H L hinges, and other features of colonial interiors are a part of the beautiful simplicity of this house.



In 1816 Dr. Charles Eldredge purchased the house and used the basement on Peirce Street as his office. His son, Dr. James H. Eldredge, took over the house and office at his father's death in 1838. The wall, facing Division Street, has a stone plaque bearing a Greek inscription which, translated, reads: "I was sick and ye visited me", a most appropriate line for the doctors who lived there.

A family tradition was established at the end of the Revolutionary War, when every window was illuminated by a candle to celebrate the victory. At the end of the Civil War and on Armistice Day, 1918, the traditional ceremony was repeated.

In 1956 the Eldredge House was purchased from Dr. Eldredge's granddaughter, Mrs. William Grainger, by Miss Charlotte House. Renovations have made this, once again, one of the loveliest old homes in East Greenwich.

#### THE DOCTOR PETER TURNER HOUSE

Facing Court House Lane, at the stone steps down to the Main street, is another fine old colonial house. Built in 1774 by John Shaw, the house was purchased in 1783 by Dr. Peter Turner. Dr. Turner was an army surgeon during the Revolutionary War and returned here to set up his practice. He used the lower floor of the house for his office.

This is a big, old house with three fireplaces downstairs and three upstairs, and a huge one in the basement where the doctor had his office. There are stone steps leading down to a dark room, like a root cellar. Here the doctor kept cool his herbs and medicines.

Dr. Turner was a great horticulturist and took pride in his grounds, which were much more extensive than today. His flower garden was on the east side of the house and many rare blossoms were seen there. He also had choice fruits and berries growing in the garden. The front door, on Court House Lane, then had a small porch shaded by an abundant

grape arbor. It is said that Dr. Turner had the first syringa, the first white lilacs and the first crown imperial ever grown in East Greenwich. The doctor lived here until his death in 1822.

Later, the Proud family resided here and Dr. Daniel Greene, whose second wife was Susanna Proud, lived here after his marriage. Silas Weaver owned it for some years, and Dr. and Mrs. Bowen bought the house in 1893. They added the ell and, in 1894, the fine stone steps built to make the Main Street more accessible from Peirce Street. In 1947, Dr. Bowen's daughter, Mrs. George A. White, Jr., sold the house to the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hitte.

### THE FREEMAN-GAMMONS HOUSE

A stately old farmhouse is this one, standing with dignity on Kenyon Avenue near Payne's Pond. It, too, has been a puzzler and can be traced by record only back to 1818, although its design and architectural features proclaim it to be of the 1770 vintage.

The first owner officially recorded at the Town Hall was Jonathan Weaver. Whether he built the house or inherited it, is a moot question. The land on which it stands was the part of John Spencer's original grant which he gave to his son, Peleg. Peleg married Elizabeth Coggeshall in 1708 and in 1733 deeded his son, John, land in this area. John's daughter, Sarah, married Jonathan Weaver in 1770 and it is probable that the basic, or original, part of the house was built by this couple.

In 1818, Jonathan sold the land and buildings to Benjamin Vaughn. Vaughn died in 1819 and his executors sold the property to William G. and Peleg Weaver, who in turn sold it to Christopher V. Spencer in 1822. In 1839, Gorton Spencer bought the land and buildings. At that time, and for years after, it was called the Gorton Spencer Farm and also, for some unknown reason, the King's Place.

The heirs of Gorton Spencer sold to Isabel Wheeler in 1902 and, after her death, her husband, George Wheeler, sold it to James and Mary Freeman in 1906. The Freemans lived there for many years. They were most generous in sharing the unspoiled beauty of their place with youngsters from the village. It was a paradise of gurgling brooks, rustic bridges, great old chestnut and oak trees, shady lanes and bright meadows. Some may recall the pleasant Sunday afternoons enjoyed there. It was sort of an unofficial park and children of the 1920's remember the owners with gratitude.

In 1928 the Freeman family sold the house and land to John A. Gammons and that family has occupied the house ever since. A large part of the original farm land has been sold off and platted. Part of it is now called Dedford Plat. Today the Freeman-Gammons House still stands sturdy and handsome, a good example of the home of the prosperous farmer of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

#### CROSSWAYS FARM

Another fine farmhouse in town is Crossways Farm now the property of Jesse W. S. Lillibridge. This large white house, once called "The White House", stands like a sentinel facing west at the intersection of Kenyon Avenue, Middle Road, and Cedar Avenue.

This house was built in 1772 by Christopher<sup>5</sup> Spencer, son of Rufus<sup>4</sup> and Ruth (Vaughn) Spencer. Christopher married Mary,<sup>5</sup> daughter of Othniel<sup>4</sup> Gorton. Their son, born in 1773 was named Rufus<sup>6</sup> Gorton Spencer. When this Rufus was ten years old, his father died and after the funeral his grandfather, Rufus<sup>4</sup> Spencer, locked the door of "The White House", leaving his young grandson crying on the doorstep. Old Rufus had a mighty hate for old Othniel Gorton, resented his son marrying Mary Gorton, and evidently carried the hatred to his grandson and namesake.

Young Rufus<sup>6</sup> Spencer went to his grandfather Gorton, who took him in and raised him to manhood. Old Othniel

took the case of ownership of "The White House" into court and young Rufus came into his own. Rufus<sup>6</sup> Gorton Spencer married Barbara Wickes.

In 1835 Lodowick Updike Shippee purchased "The White House" from the estate of William<sup>7</sup> Greene Spencer, son of Rufus<sup>6</sup> and Barbara Spencer. Lodowick Shippee was the great-grandfather of the present owner, Jesse W. S. Lillibridge. It was when the Shippees owned the farm that the name became "Crossways Farm" as it is known today.

The austere line of the house and the ideal spot on which it is situated make it one of the finest appearing homes in the area; the turbulent family feud involving Gortons and Spencers adds to its historical and romantic appeal.

#### THE WINDMILL COTTAGE

Not as ancient as some of the other houses in town, the Windmill Cottage has a charm and a history of its own. It stands on the southwest corner of Division and West Streets and was built in 1818 by Jeremiah Gardiner. It was occupied for many years by Professor George Washington Greene, grandson of General Nathanael Greene. The house was purchased for the professor in 1866 by his eminent friend, Henry W. Longfellow. It was Longfellow who was instrumental in having the windmill moved from the southeast corner of Division and West Streets and placed on the west side of the cottage to serve as a study for Professor Greene. Longfellow spent many pleasant hours in East Greenwich with his old friend.

Since the death of George Washington Greene in 1883 numerous families have lived in the house. It is now, and has been since 1935, the property of Mr. and Mrs. Paul R. Ladd.

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There are innumerable houses in East Greenwich which are worthy of mention because of their early construction,



such as: the Stanhope House, at Main and Armory Streets (1755) ; the Abraham Greene House, just north of the Town Hall (1770) ; the Allen Fry House, on Division Street (1785) ; the Lilac Cottage, on Middle Road (1715) ; the David Vaughn House, on Middle Road (1752) ; the Fry House (1716) and the Louis Fry House (rebuilt in 1793) , both on South County Trail.

These, and many more, help to create an atmosphere of respect for the past. They are a tribute to their designers and builders, as well as to the good taste of those who have preserved, restored and maintained them through the years.



EAST GREENWICH ACADEMY — 1802

## CHAPTER X    📖    📖    📖    📖

### *Education in East Greenwich— Public and Private*

The education of its children through the years is a vital part of the history of any town. East Greenwich is no exception. Organized schools had their beginnings here in the middle of the eighteenth century. From the time the town was founded in 1677, to 1826 children were either taught at home, apprenticed at an early age to local tradesmen, or attended what was commonly called a “dame school”. These dame schools were usually run by widows or single women of some education who taught in their own homes the children of the neighborhood. A number of men also ran private schools and did tutoring. Among the earliest were John Gardiner in 1744, Clement Cooper in 1750 and Adam Maxwell, a Scottish schoolmaster who tutored Nathanael Greene. One of the most unorthodox masters was a Mr. Franklin, who taught here in the late eighteenth century. He had a little schoolhouse which stood behind the present Baptist Church House, probably on

the property of Dr. Peter Turner, as Dr. Turner was instrumental in bringing Mr. Franklin to town. Master Franklin's pupils all studied aloud, each with his fingers in his ears!

Miss Catherine Coggeshall was an early and much loved teacher in town. She taught in a little old building which was a part of the Sprague estate. The Sprague house faced Marlborough Street and the schoolhouse, painted a vivid green, faced Main Street. Main Street at this time was a back street, as most of the business was maritime and transacted in the lower part of town. So this little schoolhouse probably stood in the center of the block between Long Street and Queen Streets, on the easterly side of Main Street. Miss Coggeshall's sister who married a Frenchman named Juvet, also taught here. Greenwich children, who had difficulty pronouncing her French name, called her "Miss Jubee." She, too, was a good teacher, loved and admired by her pupils.

Other small private schools of the early 1800's included Miss Thompson's, Mr. Allen's, and Mr. Brown's. Henry E. Turner, in his "Reminiscences of East Greenwich", recalls that he attended many of these schools at different periods of his youth, from the time he was four years old in 1819, until he was of high school age. For the most part it was a case of no education, if you did not have the means with which to pay for the instruction of your children.

#### THE EAST GREENWICH ACADEMY

In 1802, a few prominent citizens of this state decided to found an institution of learning here in East Greenwich. This group was composed largely of local men, many of whom were veterans of the Revolutionary War. It was decided to buy one acre and twenty rods of land from Ethan Clarke. This land was just south of the Congregational Church, now St. Luke's, and one hundred shares at thirty-two dollars each were sold to the following: Ethan Clarke, William Arnold, Richard Mathewson, Earl Mowry, Peter Turner, Ray Greene, Elihu Greene, Christopher Greene, Thomas Tillinghast, Clarke Brown, Oliver Wickes, and Wanton Casey, all of East

Greenwich and Thomas P. Ives, John and Nicholas Brown of Providence, and Caleb Wheaton of Boston. A fine colonial building was erected and bore the name of the Kent Academy. One of the early acts of the trustees was to order "a bell (the first in town) maps, a pair of globes, and such useful books as they may judge proper for establishing a library".

The first principal was Abner Alden and his assistant was Jeremiah Chadsey of Wickford. Henry E. Turner in his book recalls that, when he was very young, he attended the female department of the school and was the pupil of a Miss Thompson.

Rev. David Allen purchased the Kent Academy from the stock corporation in 1839. He was a teacher of wide repute, being one of the early text-book writers of New England. At the end of two years, Mr. Allen had built up the enrollment to ninety pupils. He inaugurated a Normal Department which prepared a number of young men and women to be teachers in the "common schools" of that time. These graduates received teacher's diplomas and it might be here noted that the very first Normal School in the United States had been established only two years earlier in Lexington, Massachusetts. Our institution was making a name for itself and, in 1858, Julia Lovejoy of Kansas published the following notice in the *Zion Herald* in Boston: "We want good female teachers, who could obtain constant employment and the best of wages. Do send on a score from East Greenwich, Wilbraham, or Newbury, Vt. We want them immediately and they would do much good."

In 1841 the school was sold to the Providence Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the name was changed to the Providence Conference Seminary and Musical Institute. In 1884 it became officially known as the East Greenwich Academy. The town of East Greenwich purchased the old Kent Academy building in 1853 and moved it to Spring Street, where it served as an elementary school for many years. A new administration building was built on the site of the Kent Academy. The boarding house for students was



burned in 1896. In 1904 the Eastman Dormitory, for girls, was built just south of the main building. The Winsor, the boys' dormitory, was north of the administration building, as was the Olney Cottage. Clarke Cottage, also a dormitory, was built on the southwest corner of the Academy property. In 1907, Mrs. Gustavus Swift had the Swift Gymnasium built in memory of her husband, the founder of Swift & Company.

During the summers, beginning in 1859, a musical institute was held under the direction of Professor Eben Tourgee. This institute was the first conservatory of music in this country. Professor Tourgee, founder of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston in 1867, had taught music at the Academy previous to that time. It was while he was here during the summer months that the famous diva, Madame Nordica, was his pupil. She was known then as Lillian Norton. Her voice thrilled East Greenwich audiences when she sang there and at the Methodist Church. She went on to great heights in her field, singing all over Europe and making her operatic debut in 1890 at the Metropolitan Opera in Verdi's "Il Trovatore". Many local people recall their parents speaking of her marvelous voice and Junoesque figure, which stood her well in the Wagnerian roles in which she later excelled.

Rose Cottage, on Peirce Street across from the Academy, was purchased in 1888 as a home for the headmaster. Probably the most outstanding principal was Dr. Francis D. Blakelee, who served from 1873-1884, 1887-1899 and 1918-1920. The Academy ranked high educationally during his administrations. Other principals who left a lasting impression were: Dr. Samuel Irwin, Dr. Francis Cooper, Dr. A. Talmadge Schulmaier and Dr. Ira Le Baron.

Through its many years of existence there were innumerable fine men and women in its lists of graduates: the Honorable Nelson Aldrich, one-time United States Senator from Rhode Island; Eben Tourgee, founder of the New England Conservatory of Music, and Charles Matteson, who served as Chief Justice in Rhode Island. Townspeople re-

member with pride the feats of prowess accomplished by the athletic teams at the Academy, when stars like Ben Solomon, Howard Proctor, the Asp brothers, Raymond Gould, Joe Gorman and "Mac" McDermott glittered in their respective sports.

In 1943, the Academy was sold to the town of East Greenwich for use as a public high school. It served the purpose until the new high school was built. In the spring of 1959 the town sold land and buildings, including the old Winsor and the administration building, to St. Luke's Church for \$22,000. Both these buildings have been razed. Thus ended one hundred and forty-one years of academic history. Although the East Greenwich Academy was a private institution, it played a major role in the public life of East Greenwich. Most of the cultural life of the town stemmed from the Academy when music, art and oratory were made available to local residents. They have proud recollections of the Academy, and rightly so, for here was the foundation of education in the town, leading the way toward broader educational facilities for all.

#### PUBLIC EDUCATION

It is hard to imagine, now that the public school system is so firmly established in East Greenwich, that there was no public school in this town prior to 1828. It was not until the spring of 1820 that the town awoke to the need for public education and named a committee to petition the Rhode Island Assembly to take action in the matter. This committee included Nathan Whiting, Dr. Charles Eldredge and Samuel Davis. These men recommended the passage of an act which read: "That our representatives in the General Assembly be instructed to use their best exertion to procure the passage of a law establishing free-schools throughout the state at public expense."

This suggestion was not acted upon immediately, and it was not until 1827 that the first school committee for East Greenwich was appointed at Town Meeting. Members of

this committee were: Dr. Charles Eldredge, Chairman; Thomas Howland, Clerk; Thomas Tillinghast, Job Greene, Joseph Briggs and Daniel G. Harris. The town was divided into five school districts and the first appropriation for schools was one hundred dollars and a like amount from the town. We have indeed come a long way, when we compare this town appropriation of one hundred dollars with the present figure of over four hundred thousand dollars.

The five district schools were erected throughout the town in convenient locations. District 1 school was built on the triangular plot between Duke and Exchange Streets. This triangle was town property and, in the original town plan, was intended for a market place. This school building was also used for a Baptist meeting house. Other district schools were: District 2 at Barton's Corner, District 3 on Shippeetown Road, District 4 was at the Tibbitts school in Frenchtown, and District 5 was at Greene's Corner, on what is now South County Trail. It is plain to see where the concentration of population was at that time.

Many ways were devised to make provision for the support of public schools. From 1831 to 1835 lotteries, called School Fund Lotteries, were drawn and executed by officers of the state. Public opinion sanctioned lotteries for this purpose. Posters and advertisements appeared in papers calling these lotteries to the attention of the citizenry. Many a hard-headed business man succumbed to the gambling lure. After 1835 this questionable practice was discontinued.

In 1853 the old Kent Academy, built in 1802, was purchased by the town and moved to Spring Street. This served as an elementary school for many years and was called the Spring Street School.

In July, 1877, land was purchased on the corner of Cliff Street and Asylum (now First) Avenue, by a school committee headed by Dr. James H. Eldredge. This was to be the site for a new grammar school, a two-story building, but only one story to be finished at that time. The school was built and dedication exercises were held on October 6, 1877. The

townspeople were very proud of this modern building, complete with individual desks, wardrobes and outbuildings. Grading and fencing was included in the contract and the entire cost was forty-four hundred dollars.

Up to 1876 there is no record of any superintendent of schools in East Greenwich. It seems possible, from all available information, that the chairman of the school committee and its members served in that capacity until Peleg Kenyon was appointed to serve first in that post in 1876. At that time the public schools had 319 pupils, C. A. Sheffield was principal, and Fanny Eddy and Sarah Booth were teachers.

Dr. H. B. Kenyon was superintendent in 1877. He was succeeded by S. W. K. Allen. While Mr. Allen held the position, in 1885, the second story of the grammar school was completed, making a four-room schoolhouse. But even with this extra space, the schools were very crowded and many makeshifts were devised to take care of the children.

In 1898 the Marlborough Street School was built on the corner of Queen and Marlborough Streets and, at this period, Vernum Briggs was superintendent. Mr. E. A. Noyes was serving as principal of the grammar school and declined the post of superintendent as long as he held that position. He will be remembered by many of his former pupils, as he taught for many years. In 1903 he was instrumental in arranging to have the "Bell Train," the train carrying the famous Liberty Bell, stop here so that the school children of the village could see it.

Overcrowded conditions in 1915 led the committee to buy the Spring Street Chapel for use as a school. Also used as a classroom was the basement of the old library, on the corner of Peirce and Montrose Streets. It was also in 1915 that the Mother's Club was organized under the leadership of Mrs. John D. Miner and Mrs. F. L. Cady. On November 1, 1915, the first meeting was held at the Town Hall. This club, which became the Home and School Club in 1918, was organized for the express purpose of working for the benefit of school children and for understanding between mothers and teachers. The club worked for consolidated schools (later



Frenchtown and Eldredge Schools) and, when the first vote on these schools was lost, the club asked for (and obtained) the kindergarten and teacher of home economics in the school system.

The Home and School Club was the forerunner of the present Parent-Teacher's Association. The P. T. A. has inaugurated many beneficial programs for the children, such as dental clinic, hot lunches, dancing classes, etc. Other organizations have cooperated with the P. T. A. to make these things possible. The American Legion and the Red Cross were of great assistance in these projects.

In 1917 Irving Phillips succeeded Samuel Irwin as superintendent, a position which he filled very capably for twelve years. All the schools were very overcrowded and it was necessary to use the chapel on Spring Street to take care of the overflow in the elementary school. In 1919, it will be remembered, two kindergartens were opened, one at St. Luke's Parish House and the other at the Neighborhood Cottage on Long Street. It was during Mr. Phillip's term, in 1926, that \$250,000 was voted for the erection of a new school. The property at First Avenue, Prospect and Friendship Streets, was purchased from Frank Murray for this purpose.

The cornerstone of the elementary school was laid by John D. Miner of the school committee in September, 1927, and in May, 1928, the school was opened for public inspection. With its sixteen classrooms, large gymnasium, and other fine features, it was a far cry from the Spring Street School. A decision was made to name the school in honor of Dr. James H. Eldredge who, as chairman of the school committee, worked so faithfully and effectively for good public schools.

A school was built in Frenchtown in 1926, consolidating the four districts in that vicinity. This, too, was a modern and attractive building. In July, 1929, the five old schoolhouses of East Greenwich were put up for public auction. These were the Tibbitts School in Frenchtown, the First Avenue Grammar School, the land where the Shippeetown School stood before it was burned in 1916, the Spring Street School, and the chapel annex. The old school on Exchange and Duke

Streets had been destroyed by fire, October, 1916. Memories galore must have surged through the minds of the townspeople when they read this news in the *Pendulum*—memories of old friends and teachers, and of the carefree days of childhood. But the hammer fell and the old Tibbitts School was sold to Walter Card for two hundred and fifty dollars. The Spring Street School was withdrawn from the auction, as the Historical Society wanted the use of it for a museum. The annex was sold to Philip Delin for four hundred dollars. The First Avenue Grammar School was sold to R. W. Westerman for two hundred and fifty dollars, with the understanding that the building be moved from the lot within thirty days and that the bell be left for a memorial. So was another era written off—the era of the small schoolhouse was no more and the town moved along to more modern times.

In June, 1938, President Roosevelt approved a grant of \$112,500 for the erection of a new high school here. It was voted down 345-175 at a special Town Meeting. At this time most of the high school students attended the East Greenwich Academy, their tuition being paid by the town. Some went to other private schools in Providence under the same tuition arrangement, because the town had no public high school.

Several superintendents served during the thirties. It was then, too, that the Marlborough Street School was sold to the East Greenwich Dairy Company. This property is now owned by the Community Food Centers, Inc. In June, 1953, decision was made to sell the Spring Street School. It was purchased by Antonio Denice for one thousand dollars. This building has since been torn down.

In 1942 the East Greenwich Academy, which had been run by the Methodist Conference, finally closed its doors after one hundred and forty years. This left the town with no high school. So, in August, 1942, the citizens once more went to the Town Meeting and, in nine minutes, approved the purchase of the Academy for \$41,750, to be used as a town high school. Now the town had an elementary school here, as well as in Frenchtown, and the purchase of the Academy completed the educational system of the town. School en-

rollment had increased rapidly. In September, 1945, the total was 652 pupils.

In 1946 Arthur A. Earnshaw, after thirty-eight years of useful service, resigned as a member of the school committee. Raymond Crompton and William Corr also resigned. Their places were filled by Walter Boren, Vincent McKone, and Stewart Essex. These men have since resigned and new members include Ellsworth S. Harding, John Pickard, James McMahon, Teresa Boesch and Sanford Hammond.

In January, 1952, a new Catholic elementary school was built by the parishioners of the Church of Our Lady of Mercy. The school, staffed by the Sisters of Mercy, is a handsome, modern building on Fourth Avenue. It has increased its grades yearly and now has eight grades and over seven hundred pupils. In February, 1951, the Mothers Club was formed. Since its organization, the group has equipped the kitchen and the auditorium, and inaugurated a hot lunch program. It also has sponsored a new school library and many other projects for the betterment of the school.

In March, 1951, at the Financial Town Meeting a proposal was made to purchase land on Middle and Howland Roads as the site for a new high school. The proposal was rejected. A new high school was really needed and the only difference of opinion seemed to be the choice of site. At this time Archie Cole was superintendent of schools (appointed in 1948) and Rufus Brackley was principal of the high school. James Foster was appointed principal of Eldredge School in 1958. After much discussion and two more town meetings, it was finally decided to purchase the land owned by J. W. S. Lillibridge on Cedar Avenue and there to build a new high school at an approximate cost of \$735,000. This was accomplished and the building accommodates the three hundred students of high school age. In the fall of 1959 a new elementary school was opened on Middle Road. It was named in honor of George R. Hanaford, town benefactor.

Through the years there have lived in East Greenwich some very public spirited citizens who, having acquired some wealth in their lifetime, decided to leave some of it to help out

with the educational needs of the town. Such men were Robert Maxwell, Pardon Spencer, George R. Hanaford, and Hugh McGraw.

The Maxwell Fund has a history so strange and involved that it may bear repeating. Robert Maxwell, a wealthy merchant of Philadelphia, was born in East Greenwich in the 1770's, the son of Master Adam Maxwell, a Scottish schoolmaster. Robert died in 1836. To the town of his birth, he left ten thousand dollars in Ohio State 6% bonds. The legacy was not paid during the lifetime of his widow or of his brother, Benjamin. The latter, from all evidence, was mentally incompetent. The widow died in 1848. Benjamin died soon after. In the meantime a financial crisis had swept the country and the United States Bank, in which Robert Maxwell had been a large stockholder, failed. The Ohio State 6% bonds were sold and the legacy collapsed.

Mrs. Maxwell, in her will, carried out as far as she was financially able the intentions of her husband. She left five thousand dollars to the town of East Greenwich, with the stipulation that Benjamin was to have the income from this amount for his support as long as he should live. He died shortly after, so this point mattered little. The principal was to be given to the town for the support of a school where all children, especially the poor, might benefit.

Mrs. Maxwell applied no particular property for payment of the bequest and, because of depreciation at the time of her death, the amount was reduced more than one half. The final sum received by the town was twenty-four hundred and fifty dollars. This was invested in various ways through the years. For a while the income from this amount was divided among scholars according to attendance and a separate account was kept, and so many days or weeks of summer term was called Maxwell School. Later, action was taken by the school committee to appropriate the income from this fund to purchase scholarships to the Academy for bright and deserving pupils from the town's grammar school.

Pardon Spencer died in 1913. In his will he left his entire estate to the town of East Greenwich, the income to be



used in support of public schools. The spirit of John Spencer, our first settler, was still strong in the Spencer clan! Pardon's total estate amounted to eighty-three hundred dollars. Both the Maxwell and the Spencer Funds have now been invested in U. S. Government bonds. The town now realizes about five hundred dollars a year from both funds.

The Hanaford Fund is of more recent origin. George Hanaford, whose interest in the town and its people earned him the affectionate title of "Mayor of East Greenwich", also had the welfare of the town at heart when he made his will. At his death in 1948, he left a sizable amount of money to the town, the income from which was to be used for the support of the public schools. To give an idea of the generous size of the legacy, the income to the town each year amounts to over five thousand dollars.

The Hugh E. McGraw Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1956 by the McGraw family and the East Greenwich Dairy Company in memory of the late Hugh E. McGraw. Under the provisions of the trust, aid will be awarded annually on the basis of financial need, scholastic standing, character, leadership and promise of future usefulness to the community without discrimination as to sex, race or creed. Six trustees were appointed to award the grants, which have already greatly benefited the young people of the town.

These four educational trusts have helped the town in the support of schools. The gestures show fine public spirit, great respect for the value of education for all, and a sincere love for East Greenwich.

Thus has our town school system developed. We have grown from the five districts with their little one room school-houses, to four large, modern buildings, taking care of over a thousand children; from dame schools, for those who could afford to send their youngsters, to modern well-staffed school-rooms, free to all. It is a "giant step" that East Greenwich has taken in the last one hundred and thirty years.



EAST GREENWICH FREE LIBRARY — 1915

## CHAPTER XI

### *The Library and Museums*

#### THE EAST GREENWICH FREE LIBRARY

It was fortunate for us that in almost every small village in New England there were a few men who, realizing the value of culture and education, did something about it. In East Greenwich on March 16, 1869, a group of such men met in the office of Dr. James H. Eldredge to discuss the problem of organizing a free library. The meeting was adjourned to March 23rd, at which time it was held at the home of Governor William Greene and here was signed and sealed the constitution of the East Greenwich Free Library Association.

Governor Greene, man of letters and a leader in the state of Rhode Island, was elected as the first president of the Association. The other members, all men of fine repute were: Dr. James H. Eldredge, scholar and physician; Rev. James T. Edwards, principal of the Academy; William N. Sherman, owner

and editor of the R. I. Pendulum; Professor George W. Greene, literary man and former consul to Italy; Richard Howland, prominent manufacturer; Samuel Knowles, scholar and banker; Dr. Daniel Greene, historian and physician; Rev. Silas Crane, rector of St. Luke's Church, and Joseph Congdon; local attorney.

The first building to house the library was on Main Street, opposite the Methodist Church. This building was used for a few months. Joseph Congdon served as the first librarian. Limited funds prohibited the hiring of a regular librarian, so from 1869 to 1884 members of the Association served as librarians. Dr. Eldredge took over from Mr. Congdon in 1872 and served for a year. Prof. Jos. Eastman, of the Academy, took the next three years and Prof. George W. Greene was librarian from 1876 to 1884. At this latter date, Rev. F. A. Loomis was appointed and served until 1903. Miss Emma Knight succeeded him as librarian, serving until 1912. Mrs. Ella D. Chapman was then appointed. Mrs. Chapman will be remembered by many, as she was a tremendously efficient librarian for over thirty years. Her successor in 1942 was Miss Helen A. Potter. The latter, in turn, was succeeded in 1951 by the present librarian, Miss Martha R. McPartland. Mrs. Mary E. Rice was appointed assistant librarian in 1955.

In February, 1870, Governor Greene advocated building a library on land purchased by the Association at the corner of Peirce and Melrose Streets. He pledged himself to pay one half the cost of the structure and, when donations were slow in coming in, he assumed the entire cost of the building. This library, which stood where the Baptist Church House is now, served as the town library until 1915.

The years between 1870 and 1915 were precarious ones, as it was very expensive to maintain a building and to staff the library. In 1893, Dr. Charles J. Thurston, a dentist in town, left most of his estate, amounting to over eleven thousand dollars, to the Library Association. This amount, when added to other smaller gifts and careful management by the trustees, enabled the library to continue and to grow.

In 1913, Mr. Daniel Albert Peirce, a trustee and treasurer of the Association, reported to the trustees that he had in mind the erection of a new library which he would build and present to the Association. Not only would he build it, but he would equip and endow this library! So, on the site of his boyhood home, on Peirce Street, the library was built. The handsome structure, built of Coventry granite, was dedicated on the 29th of June in 1915, and has since been the pride and joy of every citizen of the town. Built without regard for cost and entirely for the pleasure and convenience of the townspeople, this building offered, and still offers, the finest of library facilities. The children's room, a memorial to Mr. Peirce's daughter, Adeline, who died at an early age, is spacious and complete. The reading and reference room is well equipped with current reading and reference material. The stacks are open to the public and special collections, such as Rhode Island history and genealogy, are available.

Many local men have given their time as trustees through the years. Arthur B. Lisle was a trustee for over forty years and served as president; H. V. Allen has served for fifty-eight years, first as a member of the corporation and then as a trustee; Moses Barber was secretary for many years and was succeeded by Geo. A. White, Jr. who has held the office for over twenty years; Richard C. Leland was treasurer for twenty-four years and gave the library a great deal of time and personal interest. Many others have served long and faithfully as members of the organization. The following is a list of presidents of the Association and their terms:

Hon. William Greene, 1869-1877	Arthur B. Lisle, 1925-1948
Dr. James H. Eldredge, 1877-1880	Camilo Rodriguez, 1948-1953
Thomas W. Chase, 1880-1889	Wm. G. Roelker, 1953-1953
Charles J. Armes, 1889-1894	Howard V. Allen, 1953-1954
Dr. F. D. Blakeslee, 1894-1900	Camilo Rodriguez, 1954-1957
Rev. Daniel Goodwin, 1900-1923	David A. Jonah, 1957-
Henry P. Eldredge, 1923-1925	

The library's main source of support is still, of course, the income from the endowment left by Mr. Peirce. This amount is augmented each year by town appropriation, re-



cently raised to five thousand dollars, and eight hundred dollars from the city of Warwick. From the state of Rhode Island there is a yearly grant of two hundred dollars worth of books to be purchased through the state. The Federal Aid to Rural Libraries is a new source of revenue. Inaugurated in 1957, it now grants the library eight hundred dollars worth of books per year. These amounts combined with the small revenue from fines collected at the library, represent the various sources of income.

The library is open daily, except Sundays and holidays, from 9 to 11 a.m. and from 3 to 6 and 7 to 9 p.m., offering its services for forty-two hours each week. At present, the library has 22,379 volumes, 5,820 active borrowers, and a yearly circulation of 61,846 books. The Association offers, free to the public, four lectures a year on various subjects. For the children, a Story Hour is held on Saturday mornings during the fall and winter months.

Many factors have combined to make the library what it is today: the foresight of the founders of the Association and the continued generosity and interest of their successors; the wisdom and guidance of the several librarians; and the support and encouragement of the townspeople have melded to make the East Greenwich Free Library what it was meant to be — a living thriving monument to culture and education.

#### THE VARNUM HOUSE MUSEUM

In 1939 the Varnum Continentals purchased from A. Studley Hart, the home of James Mitchell Varnum on Peirce Street and established a museum there. The house, built in 1773, is an excellent example of colonial architecture. The museum, after only twenty years of existence, is rich in furnishings and historical data of early America.

The collection is not confined to the Revolutionary period, but houses many other valuables relating to the history of the town and state. Col. Howard V. Allen had the kitchen of the Varnum House restored in memory of his wife. The dining room has been beautifully furnished as a memorial to

Minnie Burlingame Smith. Many other Rhode Islanders have been generous in donating family heirlooms and valuable historical material to the museum.

The gems of historical significance housed by the Varnum Museum are legion. Many were outright gifts and an equal number were loaned. Among the outstanding items are: a mahogany leather-covered wing chair owned by Governor Wm. Greene in the late 1700's; a corner, or roundabout chair with finials and spindles of 1694; the Latin Bible used by Bishop Berkley about 1680; the Lowestoft punch bowl given by Lafayette to Gen. Varnum; a hatchment of the Spencer family of East Greenwich, about 1700; a certificate of membership in the Society of the Cincinnati, issued to Gen. Varnum and signed by George Washington. There are also several oil paintings, one of Gen. Varnum, one of his wife, and a painting of an unknown Revolutionary War officer by Pepper. All of these historical treasures are blended into the stately elegance of the Varnum House. The museum is open each Sunday from 3 to 5 p.m. from June through September and on Wednesdays, from 3 to 5 from July through September, or by appointment.

#### VARNUM MILITARY AND NAVAL MUSEUM

The Military and Naval Museum of the Varnum Continentals is housed in the Armory on the corner of Main and Division Streets. The Varnum Armory was built in 1914 and serves as a meeting place and auditorium for many civic and military organizations.

The museum had its start back in the years following World War I, with the modest beginning of a few captured German rifles, war posters, and two large cannons. The latter were placed just outside the main entrance to the building. These were later donated to the scrap drive during World War II.

Through the efforts of the Continentals, headed by Col. Allen, the collection now boasts over twelve hundred items. They vary from a Persian damascene helmet of medieval

days and a crossbow of the 1500's, through the period of the blunderbuss matchlock, derringer and horse pistol, to the modern automatic rifle, Colt revolver, and German luger.

The museum also has uniforms on display from all the American wars, including some fascinating headgear, such as, the American grenadier's hat, worn in the Revolutionary War (a rare item, formerly in the Fraunce Tavern Collection in New York) ; a bearskin shako, "tar bucket" and "coal shuttle" hats of the War of 1812; and military headgear from the Civil War, as well as World Wars I and II. A library of military books is growing fast and a valuable collection of swords, rapiers and cutlasses decorate the walls of the Armory.

The museum is a credit to the Continentals and a valuable reservoir for historical items. The preservation of the military history of this country is fostered by such museums and this one is unique in this area. The museum is open by appointment and on special occasions.



DOCTOR ELDREDGE HOUSE — 1773

## CHAPTER XII

### *Medicine, the Law and Journalism*

Prior to the nineteenth century, it was the custom to apprentice young men of promising ability to a practicing physician. This physician, who had acquired his knowledge of medicine in the same manner, instructed the young man, gave him medical books to read and, when he thought him sufficiently educated, presented him with a letter of recommendation which was his only credential. This was a national practice and it was not until 1812, when the Rhode Island Medical Society was organized, that pupils were examined before licensing. In 1800 there were not five medical school graduates in the state of Rhode Island. The first medical school in the United States was organized in Philadelphia in 1762. The



first medical degree awarded in this state was at Brown University in 1814.

#### DR. THOMAS SPENCER — 1679-1754

It was an odd happenstance that the first practicing physician in East Greenwich was also the first child born in the town. He was Thomas, son of John and Susannah Spencer, who was born July 22, 1679. John Spencer was one of the forty-eight original settlers of the town. Thomas was his seventh son and, because of this mystical fact, was deemed gifted with the healing art and was called "Doctor". Town records show that Thomas Spencer was a most civic-minded citizen and was highly respected by all. He was an active member of the Society of Friends.

Dr. Spencer's reputation as a doctor was excellent, and he served this town and surrounding areas for many years. He married three times, but had children only by his first wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Giles Peirce. They had four children, but only one daughter, Susannah, lived to grow up. She married Thomas Aldrich, who came from Smithfield as an apprentice doctor to Dr. Spencer. Dr. Aldrich stayed in East Greenwich for some years and was active in the Society of Friends, but never did practice medicine here.

Dr. Thomas Spencer lived to be seventy-five years of age and at his death was buried in the Friends' Cemetery near Payne's Pond. There is no stone to mark the spot. By chance Thomas Spencer was the first white child born in town, but he earned, by his kindness to the sick, his title of first physician in East Greenwich.

#### DR. DUTEE JERRAULD — 1723-1813

Dr. Jerrauld was not a native of East Greenwich, but came here in 1742 from Medfield, Massachusetts. His parents were French Huguenot refugees, but Dr. Jerrauld was born in this country in 1723. His father was a doctor and, no doubt, Dutee served his medical apprenticeship under his father. Dr. Jerrauld was about thirty years old when he came to town.

Soon after his arrival, he married Freeloze, daughter of Edward Gorton.

Dr. Jerrauld's home and office were at the corner of Duke and Queen Streets, in a house which has since been torn down. After residing here and practicing for twenty years, he moved to a small farm in Apponaug where he was more conveniently located to serve his patients in Warwick, as well as East Greenwich.

The Jerraulds had four sons and six daughters. One son, Gorton, was also a doctor. At one time he had a hospital for the inoculation and treatment of smallpox. This office was probably in the section of Warwick which was later made West Warwick.

From all available evidence, Dr. Dutee was a kind gentleman who was ever concerned with the welfare of his patients. He has been described as a short, stout gentleman with dark complexion and bright, twinkling black eyes. He lived to be ninety years of age. He died in 1813, soon after a bad fall from his carriage.

#### DR. JOSEPH JOCELYN — 1736-1780

Dr. Jocelyn came to East Greenwich from Scotland in 1770. Governor Wm. Greene persuaded him to settle here, as this area was in need of another physician. He was well thought of in town, although he practiced here only ten years. In 1774 he married Hope Campbell, widow of the lawyer, Archibald Campbell.

Dr. Jocelyn had a small hospital, situated just south of the Court House. Here he provided treatment and inoculation for smallpox, a disease much dreaded in those times. He served as a surgeon with the Ninth Continental Infantry during the Revolutionary War.

Dr. Jocelyn was his own worst enemy. He was a heavy drinker. He died in 1790, at the early age of forty-four. His death left the town without a physician. Dr. Jocelyn's grave may be seen at the foot of Wine Street in the Old Baptist Burying Ground.

Perhaps the most colorful of all the physicians in the past history of our town was Dr. Peter Turner. He was born in Newport in 1751. His father, William Turner, died when Peter was quite young. Peter studied medicine with Dr. Jabez Campfield, who was his father's half brother.

During the Revolutionary War, Dr. Turner was attached to the regiment of General Nathanael Greene, and served as surgeon to that unit through all its campaigns. His surgery on the field of battle was praised by enlisted men and officers, and he was held in highest regard by all of them. He was at Red Bank where he took such good care of the dying Count Donop, commander of the Hessian troops, that the Count presented Dr. Turner with his watch and spurs.

In 1776 Dr. Turner married Elizabeth Child of Warren. Elizabeth's sister, Patty, was already the wife of General Varnum. The Varnums had established a residence in East Greenwich and lived in their handsome new home of Peirce Street. This fact probably influenced Dr. Turner and his wife to settle here after the war. He purchased from John Shaw, the house on Court Street, which served as both home and office.

There was some apprehension on the part of the townspeople as to Dr. Turner's ability. They feared that he, being the first surgeon in town and an ex-army officer at that, might take off an arm or a leg without as much as a by-your-leave. The fact that Dr. Turner had retained the colorful, and somewhat earthy, speech of an army man did nothing to reassure the people here. But they soon learned that his bombastic manner belied the gentle, kindly doctor that he really was.

In appearance, Dr. Turner was short and stout. He wore a green patch over one eye and was often seen riding his horse about town visiting his patients. His cane, which he always carried, was pointed forward between the ears of his horse as he rode, giving the doctor the appearance of a rotund Don Quixote. As late as 1797, there were no coaches in the entire county of Kent, and Dr. Turner was the owner of the only sulky.

The doctor was an intelligent and well-read man for his time. He was one of the founders of a social library here and was most generous with books that he owned. He loved to work out-of-doors and prided himself on his flower garden.

Many young men studied medicine under his tutelage. Among them were his son-in-law, Dr. Tibbitts; his nephews, Dr. William Turner and Dr. King, and also, Dr. Thomas Tillinghast, of Frenchtown. Dr. Turner's three sons were apprenticed to him: Daniel, who was a doctor later in St. Mary's, Georgia; Henry, who moved West and never practiced medicine; and James who was a physician in Newport.

For a number of years prior to his death, Dr. Turner was confined to his room with paralysis. He died here in 1822. He was buried in the Grove, which consisted of three or four acres of oaks just above Peirce Street. Later his body was removed to Newport and buried in the family plot there.

#### DR. CHARLES ELDREDGE — 1784-1838

Born in Brooklyn, Connecticut, July 31, 1784. Charles Eldredge studied medicine with Dr. Thomas Hubbard of Pomfret. He entered the University of Pennsylvania, where he attended medical lectures and, for one year, was a resident student at the Pennsylvania Hospital. In 1810 Dr. Eldredge came to East Greenwich to substitute for Dr. Tibbitts, who had moved his office. Dr. Eldredge had no intention of establishing a practice here but considered East Greenwich a fill-in until he could establish a permanent home in a more prosperous community.

At the time Dr. Eldredge came here, there was an epidemic rampant throughout New England. Before he knew it, he was engaged in a full-time practice here and was making himself indispensable to the townsfolk. He was a disciple of Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia, a well-known physician with advanced ideas of treatment. A fine surgeon, Dr. Eldredge soon endeared himself to the town. He was a heavy, blue-eyed man with florid complexion. He was noted for his clear judgment and keen perception of human nature.



Being very public spirited, he was a member of the first school committee formed here in 1828. In 1825, he was elected state senator for the town and was re-elected four successive times. He was one of the petitioners for the charter of the Rhode Island Medical Society and one of its first members. In 1835 he received a doctor of Medicine degree from Yale University.

Dr. Eldredge died here in East Greenwich, September 15, 1838. He had spent twenty-eight years of his life in the practice of medicine in this community.

#### DR. LUCIUS WHEELER — 1799-1880

Lucius Wheeler was born in Gloucester, R. I. in 1799. He was the son of Pascal Wheeler of that town. He came as a student to East Greenwich and studied under Dr. Charles Eldredge from 1823 to 1824. He lived with the Eldredge family for some time and attended medical lectures in Philadelphia during these years. He married Patience, daughter of Capt. Perry Arnold. Dr. Wheeler practiced in Providence, as well as in East Greenwich. His first wife died after five years of marriage. He was married three times after her death.

Dr. Wheeler is also listed in an 1870 business directory of the town as the agent for several life insurance companies. He died here in 1880.

#### DR. DANIEL H. GREENE — 1807-1886

One of the physicians practicing in East Greenwich at the time of the Civil War was Dr. Daniel Howland Greene. He was a local man, born here in 1807, the son of Howland and Nancy Greene. He lived where the Hill Funeral Home now stands, at the corner of Main and Dedford Streets. This building was originally a cottage owned by Howland Greene. Through the years, additions brought it to its present dimensions. Dr. Greene had a substantial practice and was seen in and around East Greenwich driving a phaeton, drawn by two white horses. He had an office in Providence at one time, spending part of the week there.

Dr. Greene was a very literate man who read constantly and, it is said, kept his hands busy knitting while he read! He was an amateur artist and music lover. In 1834 he married Jane Hazard of South Kingstown, who died in 1836. His second wife was Susan Proud.

Dr. Greene has been described as "a man of marked individuality, of genial manner and ready wit, never at loss for repartee". His "History of East Greenwich" was published in 1877. He was particularly fond of the East Greenwich Academy and remembered that institution in his will. Dr. Greene died here on Nov. 6, 1886.

#### DR. JAMES H. ELDREDGE — 1816-1891

It is often difficult for a son to follow in the footsteps of a successful father, but James Henry Eldredge overcame this difficulty. He was the third child of Dr. Charles Eldredge, born May 27, 1816. At this period East Greenwich was still a very small village, with no public school and little to offer the average young man. James was sent to Kent Academy to start his formal education and later matriculated at Yale, studying the pre-medical course. He then pursued his studies at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and took his degree in medicine in 1838. The first doctor in East Greenwich to earn a medical degree, he intended to practice a short time with his father before branching out to a larger town or city. But, once again, fate stepped in. With the death of Dr. Charles in 1838, young James knew that he could never leave the town and, from that day, strove to serve his fellow townsmen with honor and love. Even today you will hear old citizens speak of Dr. Eldredge with reverence.

Dr. Eldredge married Anna, daughter of Charles and Freeloove Henshaw. Theirs was a happy marriage until the death of Mrs. Eldredge in 1886. Dr. Eldredge built up a practice here and, regardless of color, race or financial circumstances, he was ever ready to attend all. He was a very religious man and a faithful member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

Even though his practice continued to grow, the doctor found time to serve town, state and country very efficiently. He represented the town as a Democrat in the State Assembly (it must be remembered that the Republican Party was an infant and very unpopular with the gentry). He also served on the Town Council for many years and was a member of the school committee. He was one of the most civic-minded citizens the town has ever known. His name still lives on, as the James H. Eldredge School was named in his honor.

With the exception of being away from town during his college years, Dr. Eldredge spent his entire life here. Although his practice was large, he had many outside interests. He was a member of the original group that formed the East Greenwich Free Library Association and helped financially to build the first library.

Around the corner from Kenyon Avenue, on Cedar Avenue, is a bridge known as "Doctor's Bridge" which was built by Dr. James in memory of his physician father. He also paid for the restoration of Elizabeth Spring at the foot of Mascataug Hill, one of the oldest historical spots in the state of Rhode Island.

In 1856 Dr. Eldredge was chosen vice-president of the Rhode Island Medical Society and later became its president. He served on the Board of Censors of that body from 1860 until his death. He also spent many hours compiling, in longhand, his reminiscences of East Greenwich. They have proved to be an invaluable source of information to local historians.

Dr. and Mrs. Eldredge had two daughters: Anna, born in 1840, and Emily, born in 1843. Anna never married. She lived here all her life. Her death occurred in 1912. Emily married Edward Holbrook. They had two daughters: Emily, who married Dr. Henry Saville, and Anna, who married Rev. William Grainger. Mrs. Grainger summered in East Greenwich for many years and, until 1956, owned the Eldredge House.

In 1894 a memorial fountain was dedicated to the memory of Dr. James H. Eldredge. It first stood in front of the Kent County Court House. More recently it was moved to the grounds of Eldredge School. In 1922 the two grand-daughters of Dr. Eldredge had a wayside cross erected to his memory. It stood at Barton's Corner, until traffic became so very heavy that it was moved to the intersection of Cedar and Kenyon Avenues and Middle Road. It was the first wayside cross in Rhode Island and bears the words, "In memory of James Henry Eldredge, Physician, Lover of God and Man, Who for fifty years travelled these roads to visit the sick and suffering".

Dr. James H. Eldredge, local physician and son of a local doctor, through fate became one of the most famous citizens of one small New England town. His is the story of so many men who find happiness and contentment serving their own community.

#### DR. FRANK G. EASTMAN — 1866-1904

A native of Connecticut, Frank Eastman was born in Middletown, the son of James H. Eastman, who was at one time superintendent at the State Institutions at Howard, R. I.

Young Eastman entered Brown University in 1884, but after two years left and attended school in Portland, Maine. In 1887 he entered the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University, from which he received his medical degree in 1890. He interned at Rhode Island Hospital. Upon concluding his internship he went to Bisbee, Arizona, and was employed as a doctor at a mining company hospital. In Arizona he married Marjorie Golden of Hamilton, Ontario.

In 1895 Dr. Eastman came to East Greenwich, serving as Medical Examiner and Town Physician for five years. His career was cut short by his death in 1904 at the early age of thirty-eight. Dr. Eastman left a son, James, who was eight years old at the time of his father's death.

#### DR. GEORGE B. LANGMAID — 1848-1913

Serving the town for twenty-seven years, Dr. Langmaid came here from Melrose, Massachusetts, in 1886. Born in



North Danville, Vermont, in 1848, he was apprenticed, after graduating from high school, to Dr. Stokes of St. Johnsbury. He worked with Dr. Stokes for six months then he went West for a while but returned to study with Dr. D. Woodward for a year before going to Boston University. He studied there for three years and, in 1887, received his medical degree. He practiced in Melrose for nine years before coming to East Greenwich.

Dr. Langmaid lived and had his office in the house which stood just south of the Town Hall. A man of varied interests, Dr. Langmaid is remembered by many people in town. His hobby was meteorology. He was a weather prophet of no small ability. He had a gigantic thermometer on a large elm tree outside his house and the townfolk checked it faithfully winter and summer.

The good doctor was also a lover of horses. He kept a sulky and horses in a barn just below Main Street on King Street. He challenged all comers to race his horses, with sulky or sleigh, and he very often won. He had a small power yacht, "The Golden Rod", and was a member of the R. I. Yacht Club.

Dr. Langmaid married Florence Briggs of Rocky Hill in 1911. He was a good doctor and had many patients in this area. He died in 1913.

#### DR. WILLIAM SHAW BOWEN — 1844-1907

Dr. Bowen falls into two categories in this chapter — both medicine and journalism. He was born in East Greenwich in 1844 and his father was William Gorton Bowen, a member of the Rhode Island Bar. Young William Bowen was a member of K Company, Eleventh Infantry during the Civil War. After the war he entered Harvard Medical School from which he was graduated in 1867. Soon after graduation he was appointed a surgeon in the U. S. Navy. When he retired from the Navy he began his practice of medicine in Providence.

The urge to write was strong in Dr. Bowen and when Col. William Goddard asked him to go to New York to cover a similar project to one contemplated here, he went with alacrity. Thus his new career was launched. From that time he travelled widely for the *New York Herald* and *New York World*. He interviewed royal personages and presidents. He was sent to Samoa at the time of the disturbance there and to the South to cover the yellow fever scourge, where his medical training stood him in good stead. Joseph Pulitzer often called on Dr. Bowen to cover specific stories and his newspaper work took him to Europe, the West Indies and South America.

Dr. Bowen died here at this home in 1907. His daughter, Mrs. George A. White, Jr. is a resident of East Greenwich.

Whether to classify Dr. Bowen as a physician or a journalist is a moot question. He handled two careers at once and was probably the most travelled man of his time in the town of East Greenwich.

#### DR. ELBRIDGE G. CARPENTER — 1850-1921

Elbridge Carpenter was born in West Greenwich, March 2, 1850, the son of John and Celia (Sweet) Carpenter. He was the youngest of their ten children. His first sixteen years were spent on the farm and he was educated in the public schools in West Greenwich and Washington, R. I.

As a young man he taught school for a while in West Greenwich. In 1871 he went to Providence to study medicine under Dr. Timothy Newell, whose office was on the corner of Benefit and Meeting Streets. He also studied Latin with Dr. Frank Clarke of Thomas Street, Providence. After three years, he attended medical lectures at Yale and then, in 1874, graduated from the University of Vermont. That same year he began his medical practice in East Greenwich. For the next thirty-five years, with the exception of the time he spent studying at the Universities of Jena, Leipsig, Berlin and Vienna, he practiced medicine in this town. He spoke German fluently and French very passably.

In 1875 Dr. Carpenter married Olive Lewis, who died in 1899. He married again in 1901, this time to a Greenwich girl, Anna Brown.

In the later years of his life Dr. Carpenter was paralyzed. Some of us recall his being carried to his carriage in the arms of his faithful nurse, Herbert Maples. After many years of suffering, Dr. Carpenter died on March 30, 1921.

#### DR. HERBERT B. HORTON — 1873-1930

A practicing physician in East Greenwich for twenty-three years, Dr. Herbert Horton was born in East Providence, R. I., on January 25, 1873. He was the son of Nathan and Mary Horton. After completing his high school education in East Providence, he entered Brown University and graduated from that institution in 1896. In 1897 he enrolled at the medical school of the University of Michigan and, upon receiving his medical degree, practiced in Michigan until 1904. Then he returned to Rhode Island, setting up a practice in Lonsdale.

In 1906 he served for a short time as superintendent of schools in East Providence. In 1907 he came to East Greenwich and established his practice here. A most public spirited man, Dr. Horton served the town in many capacities. For six years he was a member of the school committee and, from 1919 to 1924, was a member of the Town Council. He also served as Town Moderator, Health Officer and School Physician.

Dr. Horton married Elizabeth A. Swan in 1917. His office was for many years in the house just north of the Town Hall. The doctor is remembered as a quiet, kindly man, who tended the medical needs of the community and served well as an active participant in town affairs.

#### DR. FENWICK G. TAGGART — 1876-

In Rhode Island medical circles, the name of Dr. Taggart is synonymous with that of East Greenwich. He was born in Charlotte, Vermont. As a teen-ager, he enlisted for the

Spanish-American War, going to Cuba with the Vermont Unit. When he was discharged, he entered the University of Vermont Medical School, where he received his degree in 1903. He interned at the City Hospital, now called Bellevue, in New York City.

In 1904 Dr. Taggart came to East Greenwich to fill in for Dr. Eastman who was very ill. Dr. Eastman died and Dr. Taggart stayed on, establishing an office in the Masonic Building. Later his office was on the corner of Main and Division Streets until he moved to his present location at 1 Montrose Street.

When World War I broke out, Dr. Taggart was sent overseas and became a major in the Medical Corps. At the outbreak of World War II, he was ready to go again but was not called.

The good doctor has served the townspeople of East Greenwich for fifty-six years and represents the finest kind of family physician, taking care of young and old with a knowledge of home conditions and background that is so necessary to good medical care. Dr. Taggart has brought over twenty-five hundred babies into the world and hereabout you will find many namesakes — aged from five to fifty.

In 1908 Dr. Taggart married Edythe Miller. She has shared the doctor's work for these many years. In 1956 the doctor was tendered a reception at the Varnum Armory. People came from far and near to pay tribute to this man who has given so many years of his life to healing the sick in East Greenwich. At this writing, Dr. Taggart is still practicing at the age of eighty-four.

#### DR. CHARLES A. PHILLIPS — 1884-

Charles Phillips was born in Lewiston, Maine. His father, Irving C. Phillips, came here to serve as superintendent of schools in 1917. Dr. Charles went to Harvard Medical School, where he graduated in 1910. In 1913 he came here to substitute for Dr. Powers, who was ill. Like so many others, Dr. Phillips stayed on because he was needed.



Dr. Phillips has served as town physician and has had his office in the old Brick House on the corner of Main and Long Streets. For forty-seven years, he has ably served the town and become indispensable to his many patients.

#### DR. JOSEPH A. BAUTE — 1900-

Dr. Baute is a native of Kentucky, where he was born in 1900. He graduated from Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital in Philadelphia in 1926. Dr. Baute's father was a doctor in Kentucky and his brother is a physician, too. Continuing in the family tradition, Dr. Baute's daughter, Barbara, is a practicing physician and his son, Peter, recently received his medical degree from Hahnemann.

Dr. Baute has his office just over the line in Warwick and serves both communities. He has been in East Greenwich for over thirty years, endearing himself to this Yankee town. Dr. Baute is a veteran of both World War I and II, having served in the Marine Corps in the first war and in the Navy Medical Corps in the second.

#### DR. GEORGE A. YOUNG — 1904-

Born in West Springfield, Massachusetts, George Young came, with his parents, to Warwick when he was eight years old. He attended Warwick schools and went to the University of Rhode Island where he graduated in 1925. Later, he went to Harvard Medical School and graduated in 1934. After interning at the Rhode Island Hospital, Dr. Young set up practice here in East Greenwich. He married Elizabeth Gammons. They have five children. Dr. Young has a flourishing practice and he, too, serves both Warwick and East Greenwich, his office being just over the line in Warwick.

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In recent years other young men have set up practice here. Dr. Stevens McDaniel, an osteopathic physician; Drs. Gilbert Houston, Bruno Franek, Uno Uustal and John E. Murphy, have swelled the number of men giving good medical service to this area.

Doctors of dentistry in the town have been numerous. In the early years, the local physicians extracted teeth. Dentists were very scarce. The first dentist to advertise in the local papers in the 1880's was Dr. Walter H. Heald. He had an office near where Hart's Department Store is today. He advertised in the annual tax book: "We make, for ten dollars, a Permanent set of teeth". Nothing seems to be available on the background training of Dr. Heald, but he evidently did a lucrative business because he constructed the brick building across from the Fire Station (now owned by Walter Ogren) and later had his office there. Dr. Charles J. Thurston was another early dentist in town. His office was on the corner of Main and Dedford Streets.

In 1888 the Greene Drug Store in Providence sent a young pharmacist named Walter R. Riley to manage their East Greenwich store. He stayed until 1892, when he left to attend the University of Pennsylvania to train for the profession of dentistry. He graduated in 1894 and returned to set up practice in East Greenwich in the Browning Block. Later he moved to the Masonic Building where he practiced dentistry until his death in 1924. Dr. Riley's widow, Mrs. Grace Riley, still resides on Peirce Street.

Another dentist in town was Dr. Walter Crease. He had an office on Main Street, on the east side of the block between Long and Queen Streets.

In 1918 a recently discharged lieutenant in the United States Medical Corp, Dr. Philip A. Duffy, came to practice dentistry here. Dr. Duffy, a native of West Warwick, was one of eleven children of Philip and Margaret Duffy. He graduated from Tufts Dental College in 1916. For forty years Dr. Duffy served the community, practicing here from 1918 until his death in 1958. His office was first at the corner of Division Street, later over Koch's Pharmacy and, finally, in the Halsband Building.

Dr. Kenneth Scott has also practiced dentistry here for a number of years, as has Dr. Edward Truhan, whose office is just over the line in Warwick. Three new dentists, Dr. George

Marot, Dr. Samuel Rouslin and Dr. Herbert Underhill, have also come to town in recent years.

### THE LAW AND LAWYERS IN EAST GREENWICH

The law is always a prime necessity in the founding of a town. Here the rules and regulations were drawn up by members of various committees. Deputies were appointed to represent the people in the General Assembly: public whipping posts and stocks were erected near the Court House to punish wrongdoers publicly. Sessions of court were, as a rule, held in early years at the home of the Justice of the Peace. Early in the town's history, in 1686, Pardon Tillinghast's home served as a court and he presided as justice. John Spencer, when he was Town Clerk, held meetings of the Town Council in his home as early as 1678.

One of the most interesting records of legal proceedings to come down to us is concerned with an all-woman jury, which presided in July, 1684, at the trial of a young unmarried mother. Members impaneled were: Anna Bennett, widow of Samuel; Hannah Long, wife of Philip; Sarah Knight, widow of Richard; Elizabeth Heath, wife of John; Elizabeth Pearce, wife of Giles; Elsa Wood; Catherine Weaver, widow of John; Nancy Nichols; Mandy Snell; Anna Knight, wife of John Knight. Elsa Wood, Mandy Snell and Nancy Nichols were probably wives, or widows of local men. At such an early date as 1684, this may have been the first all-woman jury in Rhode Island and one of the earliest in the country.

As time went on, men prepared themselves for the practice of law much as the doctors did, that is by apprenticeship to those already established in the profession.

Archibald Campbell is the first lawyer of whom there is any account passed down through the years. Whether he was apprenticed or college educated is not known. He came here from Scotland in search of religious liberty, settling first in Voluntown, then in East Greenwich in 1750. He and his family lived in the house on the corner of Main and Montrose Streets. He ably represented the townspeople in the General



Assembly and was well thought of by all. In the Old Baptist Burying Ground is his headstone which reads: "In memory of Archibald Campbell, Esquire, son of Archibald and grandson of Rev. Daniel Campbell and nephew of John Campbell, late president of the College of Glasgow, who departed this life Oct. 16, 1769 in the 41st year of his age". Then follows a Latin inscription which, when translated reads: "Traveler, behold the patriot, the lawyer, the kind father and the most indulgent husband". A fine tribute to a man, these words have withstood the weather and the ravages of the years.

Jacob, son of Archibald Campbell, was also a lawyer and was born in East Greenwich in 1760. He was graduated from Brown University in 1783 with high honors. Jacob was something of a literary man and wrote poetry. By nature he was high strung and very proud. He practiced law here but was overshadowed by James M. Varnum, whose personality was much more genial. Jacob, according to Wilkins Updike in his "Reminiscences of the R. I. Bar", "formed an attachment" for Eliza Russell, daughter of Joseph Russell, a man of wealth and prominence in Providence. When only twenty-eight years old, Jacob contracted consumption. His friend Eliza tended him faithfully but he lived only a few months. She retired into deep seclusion, her windows were heavily draped so that no light penetrated her room, and her friends who saw her said she talked of nothing but Jacob. The stone at his grave in the Baptist Cemetery was placed there by Eliza. She soon grieved herself to death, but was not buried beside Jacob. Her family placed her in their own plot in Providence. A rather sad tale, this one of Jacob and Eliza, a story which has lost nothing in re-telling over the years!

Our real claim to fame, in the annals of the law, lies with James Mitchell Varnum, of whom more is written elsewhere in this volume. He was well-educated, widely read and a master of oratory. In the case of Trevett vs. Weeden, the phrasing, thought and spirit of Varnum's defense of Weeden is considered by many scholars of the law to be a basis for our own Constitution, so impassioned and powerful was his plea for liberty and justice.



Albert Collins Greene, another lawyer, was a native of East Greenwich. The son of Perry Greene, he was born in 1792. As a young man he read law in New York though not a college graduate. He served in the General Assembly of this state and was chosen Speaker. He was Attorney-General of Rhode Island from 1825 to 1843 and United States Senator from 1845 to 1851. He died in Providence in 1863.

Nathan Whiting, a native of Franklin, Massachusetts, was a well-educated, even erudite man. He graduated from Brown University and was admitted to the bar in 1800. He came to East Greenwich and immediately upon his arrival was chosen to deliver the oration on the death of George Washington. He combined teaching with the law, serving as principal of the Academy from 1822 to 1823.

Joseph L. Tillinghast, William G. Bowen, Joseph Winsor and William Peck were all lawyers in this area in the middle 1800's.

Of a more recent period was Judge George Loomis, who, although not a member of the bar, performed ably the role of mentor of the law. Born in Yarmouth, Massachusetts, he came here with his family in 1876 at the age of fourteen. He studied for the ministry and was an avid reader and student of the law. In 1893 he was appointed to the office of Town Clerk. He appointed his wife, Minnie B. Loomis, as his deputy in 1911. From 1900 to 1939 he was clerk of the Fourth District Court and, as such, gave excellent legal advice to many in town. At the death of Judge Loomis in 1943 his wife succeeded him, and Miss Helen Anderson was appointed deputy. Miss Anderson was appointed Town Clerk in 1943, an office which she still fills capably. The records at the Town Clerk's Office are declared among the best in the state of Rhode Island, attesting to the efficiency of the long line of holders of the office.

At the present time East Greenwich has several lawyers, well trained in their profession. Dean of this group is Judge John E. Mullen, a graduate of Providence College and Georgetown Law School. He came to live in East Greenwich in 1929, and has taken an active part in political and civic affairs. He

served as chairman of the Civil Defense Council during World War II, was assistant Attorney-General of Rhode Island, and is now an associate justice of the Superior Court of Rhode Island.

Clinton Clough graduated from Brown University in 1923 and from Harvard Law School in 1926. He was admitted to the bar in 1927 and practiced in Warwick before he came to East Greenwich in 1937. He has served as moderator of the Town Meetings and in other civic positions.

Joseph G. Reed is a local man, educated in the elementary schools in town, at La Salle Academy, Manhattan College and at Boston University, where he received his law degree in 1941. His legal career was interrupted by World War II when he was for four years a lieutenant in the Transport Service. He has served on various town committees and is active in local and state politics.

Within the past few years new names have been added to the list. William Parmenter and Edward J. Regan are comparative newcomers. Mr. Regan is judge of the Probate Court. Ambrose Carroll, James Bulman and Robert Pickard have come to make their homes in this vicinity, although their law practice is mainly in Providence offices.

The practice of law has always carried much responsibility and East Greenwich lawyers, from Archibald Campbell to our present day representatives, have done their part to keep the calibre of their profession on a high plane.

#### GENTLEMEN OF THE PRESS

The first newspaper published in East Greenwich was the Kent County *Atlas*, owned and operated by John B. Lincoln. In 1854, after only two years of publication, the paper was purchased by William N. Sherman of Woonsocket, who had been with the Woonsocket *Patriot*. Mr. Sherman first called the paper the *Weekly Pendulum and General Advertiser for Kent and Washington Counties*. This name proved cumbersome and, in June, 1856, the first copy of the Rhode

Island *Pendulum* came off the press. The name came from the fact that the paper was published one week in East Greenwich and the next week in Wickford.

The first *Pendulum* office was on Main Street, where the Hill Funeral Home is now. Dr. Daniel Greene occupied the north part of the building. The *Pendulum* was published on Fridays from 1858 to 1888. Since that time, Thursday has been the publication day.

In 1877 Mr. Sherman sold the paper to Daniel C. Kenyon; at that time, the *Pendulum* had from five to six thousand readers in Kent and Washington counties. Mr. Kenyon had the paper printed in Providence until a printer, Milton Reynolds, moved his plant here from Providence. He set up presses on London Street where the *Pendulum* is printed now, although the paper was officially still published from the Main Street office.

Daniel C. Kenyon died in 1887 and the paper was auctioned off for three hundred and twenty-five dollars to Josiah B. Bowditch, editor of the *Providence Telegram*. Vernum Briggs became editor and publisher in 1889. He bought the plant of the Greenwich Printing Co., including the paper the *Greenwich Enterprise*, which had been published for a short time by Tom C. Brown. The press used at this period was purchased by Henry Ford and is now the property of the museum at Dearborn, Michigan.

Oliver Still became editor in 1890. He was a deputy sheriff, a red-hot crusader and was addicted to writing scurrilous editorials. In 1890 his printing plant was burned. Assisted by the New England Newspaper Union, he continued to publish. In 1892 the paper failed and was taken over by Charles Carroll. After three years, Mr. Carroll sold it to Frank S. Adams of New Hampshire. Mr. Adams' slogan was "A family paper devoted to local life and general intelligence". In 1897 he sold the paper to Will Burnside and H. V. Baldwin and they formed the Wilma Publishing Co. Baldwin pulled out in 1898 and William B. Streeter became editor. Streeter was another editor, like Still, addicted to tirades. A



classic example of his explosive writing style appears elsewhere in this book in the article about Scalloptown.

In 1900 A. W. Laughlin purchased the paper and ran it until his death in 1909. Mr. Laughlin made the paper really local, publishing little or no national news. In 1909 Edward Blackburn from Middletown, Connecticut, acquired the paper and ran it for two years. In 1912 the *Pendulum* came under the control of a board of directors, headed by Fay R. Hunt and Samuel Irwin.

Joseph A. Petty, a native of Ohio, came to East Greenwich in 1929, leasing the *Pendulum* from Fay R. Hunt. In 1934, the *Pendulum* took over the *East Greenwich News*, a rival weekly, published for a few years by H. Irving King. In 1952 Mr. Petty and Stanton Smith became co-owner and the paper was incorporated under Rhode Island law. By this time all printing machinery had been replaced with modern printing presses and linotype machines. Mr. Petty acquired the services of Caroline T. Lincoln, a local girl with her finger on the pulse of her hometown, who helped him build up the circulation to its largest figure in the hundred years of its existence.

In 1955 Joseph A. Petty died. His son, Travis, took over for a short time, until the paper was sold to Jacob and Sarah Goodman in 1958.

The Rhode Island *Pendulum* has been in continuous existence for over one hundred years. It has been a Thursday night "must" for generation after generation and has subscribers, many of them homesick East Greenwich-ites, from Maine to California. Never pretending to be other than a small town newspaper, the *Pendulum* has survived the years, outlasting the few rival sheets and taking its place as one of the oldest weeklies in continuous circulation in the country.





QUAKER MEETING HOUSE — 1804

## CHAPTER XIII

### *The History of Religious Beliefs in Town*

Religion and religious freedom were the driving forces in the settlement of Rhode Island, with Roger Williams leading the way. Religion, of some persuasion, was as vital to the people then as it is now, and it was not long after its settlement that this town had groups meeting for religious services in various homes. The majority of the earliest settlers were of the Baptist faith, following in the footsteps of Roger Williams. But it was the group of Quakers here who had the first meeting house in the town of East Greenwich.

#### FRIENDS MEETING OF EAST GREENWICH

The search for religious freedom led many persons, banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony, to seek a haven here in Rhode Island. A number of these colonists were of a group

founded by George Fox in 1647 and known as the Society of Friends, more commonly called Quakers.

Quaker meetings on this side of Narragansett Bay began in 1699, under the name of the Narragansett Monthly Meeting. It was first held at the home of the first clerk, John Briggs, who lived in Kingston. It was thereafter called Kingston Monthly Meeting. After three months it was removed to the home of a Quaker in Warwick and then, finally, to the Meeting House in East Greenwich.

The original Meeting House was built on John Spencer's land near Payne's Pond. It was used, when partly finished, in 1700, but was not really completed until 1703. The burying ground is still used. It is near where the old Meeting House stood on Cedar Avenue. Most of the graves are marked with only plain fieldstones, many with no names, the Quakers believing that ornate headstones were indicative of vanity.

In 1804 another meeting house was built on Peirce Street near the center of the village, just south of the East Greenwich Academy property. It was a large building of wood, having two floors. The upper floor was used for children's gatherings and for the social activities of the society.

Quarterly meeting, for many years, rotated among four meeting places. In summer it was held in Newport, in autumn in Fall River, in winter in Providence, and in the spring at East Greenwich. "Quaker Day" in May was a great occasion for the town. People recall the boat loads of Friends from Newport and Portsmouth arriving at the foot of Queen Street and others arriving in carriages, horseback or a-foot. The bell on the Academy rang out to welcome the boats and the students were dismissed from their classes to go down and watch the Quakers land on the shore of our town. The Updike Inn would be filled to capacity and Quakers here in town opened their doors to their neighboring Friends.

In the manner peculiar to their sect, the Friends conducted their meetings. Members, both ministers and others, spoke as they felt "moved", either to quote a passage of Scrip-

ture, to give "testimony" for peace, prohibition, or in early days, against slavery. Quarterly meeting was a social as well as a business and religious gathering. During the noon recess a bountiful baked bean dinner was served and a fine time was enjoyed by all present, both young and old.

One of the ministers of this faith who was held in great respect by all was Nathanael Greene of Potowomut. Grave and Quaker-like, he was a very religious man. He had eight sons, one of whom was Nathanael, Jr., destined to become the famous Revolutionary War general. Young Nathanael liked gaiety, loved social gatherings and dancing. He was punished repeatedly by his father for this unQuakerlike behaviour. A serious situation arose when the dispute with England became imminent. Nathanael knew that he could not bear arms without being cast out of the Society of Friends, but his duty to his country he felt even more strongly. He did not hesitate in his decision and made public profession of his sentiments by attending and participating in a military parade at Plainfield, Connecticut. The Friends were reluctant to deal with the son of so prominent and popular a minister, but on the thirtieth of September in 1775, after much deliberation and a most unsatisfactory interview with the culprit, the following minutes were entered in the Quaker record:

"The matter referred to this meeting concerning Nathanael and Griffin Greene (a cousin), as they have not given this meeting any satisfaction for their misconduct, therefore this meeting doth put them from under the meeting until they make satisfaction for their misconduct, and appoint John Greene to inform them of the same".

Thus was Nathanael Greene "read out of meeting" — a painful step for himself and a grievous blow to his family. No doubt the teaching and inspiration of nearly thirty years of Quaker training, combined with inborn military genius, produced a leader indispensable to the cause of liberty in this country.

The Quaker Meeting House in East Greenwich was torn down in 1952. The landmark is sorely missed. The Society

of Friends in this area, whose first clerk was John Briggs, had as its last clerk, E. Annah (Briggs) Tucker, a lineal descendant of the same John Briggs. So the few remaining members of the once flourishing East Greenwich Monthly Meeting are scattered. But plenty of Quaker blood flows in the veins of East Greenwich people, and Quaker principles live in the character of everyone who is proud to say "My ancestors were Friends".

#### BAPTIST CHURCH AND THE OLD BAPTIST BURYING GROUND

Clement Weaver petitioned the Town Council, in 1726, for a lot on which a church of the Six Principle Baptist Faith could be built. They granted him Lot No. 54, one of those unassigned when the lots were drawn in 1700. The lot was near the end of Division Street, just at the brow of the hill as it dips to the shore. The land ran through to Wine Street and that area is still known to local people as Meeting House Hill. The church was built facing Division Street and the churchyard ran through to Wine Street.

The church was used until 1815 when it was blown down in a gale. The congregation was forced to use the Kent County Court House and later the school-house on Duke Street as their temporary church. The first record of a regular minister was in 1743, when Rev. Daniel Fiske served some fifty-three members.

The best known minister, and longest in point of service, was Rev. John Gorton. Elder Gorton was the son of Samuel and Elizabeth (Greene) Gorton. He was born in Warwick in 1723. In 1783 he married Phoebe Sheldon, widow of Rev. Benjamin Sheldon. Elder Gorton performed two hundred and eighty-one marriages in East Greenwich. The most famous one at which he officiated was that of General Nathanael Greene and Catharine Littlefield. The marriage was performed in the south parlor of the Greene Farm on Division Street.

The present Six Principle Baptist Church in this area is the Frenchtown Baptist Church which was organized in 1848. It was at one time called the Seminary Baptist Church. At one



period the church was shared with the Calvinist Baptists, who divided the four Sundays of the month with their fellow Baptists. This arrangement proved harmonious until a five Sunday month started a fracas which ended in the Calvinists going over to the Quidnessett Baptist Church for their services. Elder Samuel Madison was an early preacher at the Frenchtown church, but probably the best known was Elder Thomas Tillinghast who baptized, married and buried many natives of the section. The Frenchtown Baptist Church for many years had no permanent pastor but had student theologians to conduct services. They now have a regular pastor, Rev. Walter Holder. The church is active and has had to make additions to the church structure to accommodate the crowded Sunday School.

The present Baptist Church in town was organized in 1839. The Rev. Thomas Tew of Newport came here to supervise the organization, and seventeen East Greenwich people were signed up as members. They were, A. G. Littlefield, Thos. Tilley, Thos. Tew, Darius Hart, and their wives; also, Joseph Greene, Maria Gardiner, Hetty Remington, Mercy Miller, Iliza Miller, Phebe Brown and Sophia Parkinson. Their first church edifice was built in 1847 and stood where Zenga's Restaurant is now. This served local Baptists until 1884. In 1887 the present church on the corner of Montrose and Peirce Streets was completed and dedicated. It had been used, in part, three years prior to its dedication.

A number of ministers served here for short periods during the first ten years of Baptist church history. In 1868 the Rev. Gilbert Robbins was pastor of the old church on Main Street. He remained here until 1879. The Rev. Theodore C. Gleason served as pastor of the First Baptist Church on Peirce Street from 1908 to 1919. The Rev. C. Barnard Chapman was the minister in the late Twenties and early Thirties. The present pastor is Rev. Wilmont J. Murray who came to Greenwich in 1958 to succeed the Rev. John Wilbur who had been here five years. During Rev. Wilbur's time the modern church-house was built on the southeast corner of Montrose

and Peirce Streets. It serves as a Sunday School building and as an auditorium for church and civic groups.

The Baptists may rightly claim the honor of being the oldest religious body in continuous existence in East Greenwich. The founding fathers were Baptists and not Quakers, as many seem to think. The Quakers always have taken a firm stand against bearing arms and the settlers of this town were given land in recognition of their participation in the Indian Wars.

Being such an old town, East Greenwich naturally has many cemeteries, some large and others small. The old Quaker Cemetery is on Cedar Avenue near Payne's Pond, the Greenwich Cemetery on First Avenue, St. Patrick Cemetery on Sixth Avenue, and Glenwood Cemetery on Middle Road. Up in Frenchtown there are innumerable small family plots which are, for the most part well kept. But without doubt the most interesting one, in view of town history, is that of the Old Baptist Burying Ground.

As previously noted, the majority of the town's founders were of the Baptist religion and part of the land that Clement Weaver had allotted to the Six Principle Baptist Society was to be used for a cemetery. This cemetery is now maintained as an historic shrine by the Gen. Nathanael Greene Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. It is located at the very end of Wine Street. Many stones have been broken through the years and some graves are marked only by field stones. Many persons lie in this burial ground without a marker of any kind, as time and vandalism have made them anonymous.

In looking through the cemetery there are a number of stones with interesting epitaphs, among them the grave of John Gorton, who served as pastor of the first Baptist church. On his stone is inscribed, "Elder John Gorton who died in 1792 in his 70th year. He was for 39 years and nine months ordained minister of the Baptist Church in town". Around him lie many of his flock and their children, such as: Joseph Greene of Rope Walk fame and his wife, Patience; Dr. Joseph

Jocelyn, town physician; Catherine Coggeshall, one of the town's early school teachers, and Archibald and Jacob Campbell, lawyers of East Greenwich.

Up beyond the built-up section of the town, you will find several well-tended cemeteries. The Bartons, Shippees, Spencers and Holdens have maintained these family plots for many years. On the town line, between East and West Greenwich, is the Whitford-Tarbox family burial ground. It contains the oldest marked grave in this area, that of Pasco Whitford. The headstone is plainly marked "P W", with the year of his death 1690 clearly inscribed. On Love Lane, just over the line in Warwick, is a beautiful cemetery, set on a knoll on the property of Mrs. Wm. G. Roelker. This is the Greene Cemetery and resting here are ten generations of Greens. An iron gate leads in from Love Lane and the path to the burial place is an archway of rhododendron. In June, when they are in bloom it is a breathtaking sight. Each one of the graves is covered with a blanket of myrtles, which bloom is purple profusion in the spring.

A good job of marking has been done and almost every little cemetery up through the western part of the town is designated as an historical spot. It is a great way to spend a spring afternoon, "cemeterying" your way up Middle, Frenchtown and Carr's Pond Roads, take the author's word for it.

### THE CATHOLIC CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Although there are no official documents regarding this church until 1815, it came into existence long before that time. It was built in 1774 by local men, just at the time feeling against the British was running high. Tradition has it that these men left their labors of church-building and went down to Rope Walk Hill to help hang in effigy that unpopular Tory, Stephen Arnold. The Catholic Congregational Church stood where St. Luke's Episcopal Church stands today. The first pastor was Rev. Daniel Waldo, a missionary from the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Three



persons entered into a covenant in establishing the church: they were Mrs. Coggsell, from the First Church in Newport; Mrs. Anna M. Greene, from Second Church in Newport; and Mrs. Mahala Salisbury, from First Church in Little Compton. Captain and Mrs. Silas Holmes of this town made their profession of faith and are the first recorded members of the church. Of course, many other members must have been here as the church had been in existence for forty years before the first records were made in 1815. Rev. Mr. Waldo served as pastor until 1829, when Rev. Michael Burdett was selected. Rev. Wm. J. Johnson succeeded him.

The original Congregational Church was a wooden structure, two stories high. It resembled a dwelling house. It was on the meeting-house idea rather than a church edifice as thought of today, and it fronted on Peirce Street. It had a tower with a winding staircase leading to the gallery, where there were seats for those who might want to exit before the end of the service. The lower part of the church was furnished with pews and the pulpit was a circular one, quite high with a long flight of stairs winding up to it. Two large candlesticks adorned the pulpit. These were said to have come from a house in Portugal and were probably donated by a sea-faring member of the congregation. For a time, Rev. Chas. H. Alden, an Episcopal minister and nephew of Abner Alden, first principal of the Academy, served as pastor. So other denominations may have used this church at various times.

When the church was first built, there was no regular pastor. Members of the congregation often read printed sermons. One of those who filled the pulpit was the Revolutionary War hero, Captain Thomas Arnold. He had a soldier's vocabulary and was heard to remark, after reading a sermon on a hot Sunday morning, that "it was damn hard work to preach". Another Elder, exasperated by the congregation, was so discouraged that he told them "I've hollered and bawled to ye this forty years, and ye ainst no better". Many a preacher has echoed these sentiments today, less quaintly perhaps, but surely more grammatically!



## THE METHODIST CHURCH

Traveling preachers were prevalent in early times and went from town to town as missionaries. This was especially true of the Methodist preachers, one of whom was Rev. Jesse Lee. In 1789 he preached at Charlestown, Rhode Island, and made his way from there to Lynn, Massachusetts, preaching in each small town along the way. It is very probable that he stopped here in East Greenwich. The Methodist Society, however, was not formally organized here until 1791. The original group was comprised of seven women, among whom were Mrs. Ruth Mumford, Mrs. Joseph Greene, Mrs. James Sweet, and Miss Polly Cooke.

In the beginning, services were held at the Court House, which was a haven for all religious groups not having a meeting-house. East Greenwich then became a regular stopping place for itinerant preachers on the Methodist circuit. Rev. J. C. Rusley was appointed pastor in 1822. But it was not until 1831 that the first Methodist Church building was erected at the corner of Main and Queen Streets. The Rev. Pliny Brett was another early pastor and a succession of ministers followed, most of them remaining here only a year or two.

The land for the present edifice was donated by a Mrs. Greene. Early trustees were Oliver Wickes, Daniel Greene, Ezra Pollard, Thomas Allen, Fones G. Hill, and David Hunt. In 1846 a parsonage was built at the rear of the church. In 1850 the church building was enlarged, and in 1876 another new addition was added to make room for a new organ and choir stall. The Power Street Church in Providence donated the organ through the efforts of Dr. Eben Tourgee. Dr. Tourgee was then the head of the music department at the Academy.

Prior to 1891, the church presented a much different appearance than it does today. A flight of six or eight steps led to the door of the church and Corinthian pillars adorned the front of the edifice. It was about that time (1891) that the entrance was changed to its present appearance.

Greenwich people have labored long and hard with their pastors to introduce, organize, and maintain Methodism in the community. Names such as Hill, Wheelock, House, Hart, and Kinlock recall laymembers who worked for the progress of the church. The oldest living member is Miss Etta Babcock, who joined the church in 1887 under the pastorate of Rev. S. H. Day.

In late years the church has grown enormously in membership. People here recall with pleasure the pastorates of several ministers including Rev. Peter Palches and Rev. Richard Colby. The present pastor is Rev. Wesley Stinson, who has served for two years. The Stinsons live at the Parsonage on Spring Street, acquired by the church in recent years. The old parsonage has been torn down to make way for a handsome new church-house, completed in 1958, to serve the growing needs of the congregation.

An historic item should be added here. The Constitutional Convention was held in this Methodist Church in the fall of 1842. Ex-Governor James Fenner presided. The convention drew up a State Constitution to be submitted to the people. It was adopted and so ended charter government, under which the state had lived for over one hundred and fifty years. A bronze plaque on the church bears testimony to this historic fact.

#### ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Episcopal Church in the East Greenwich area dates back to the first quarter of the eighteenth century. In 1726 the congregation at Trinity Church in Newport built a new church. Their old one was taken down and sent by sloop to Cowesett for the use of the people in that area. This small church was re-erected and used for several years. About 1764 it was taken down to be moved to Old Warwick, but before this could be done a storm swept away the materials.

St. Luke's Church was organized in 1833 and incorporated by the Rhode Island General Assembly in January, 1834. Incorporators were Rev. Sylvester Nash, Chairman; John P.

Roberts, Secretary; Augustus Greene, Treasurer. The wardens were Charles Eldredge and Joseph Tillinghast. The vestrymen were Daniel Greene, Howland Greene, Wicks Hill, Silas Weaver, Kingsly Bullock, John G. Ladd, Emery Fiske, Wanton Casey, and William G. Spencer.

Land was purchased from the Catholic Congregational Society for two hundred and fifty dollars, and a church was erected in 1834. Rev. Sylvester Nash was the first rector and, although rector for only six years, he raised sufficient funds to clear the property and church corporation from all indebtedness. His successor was Rev. William H. Moore, who was here for only one year.

In December, 1840, Rev. Silas Crane was appointed rector and remained in that capacity for thirty years. He was highly esteemed and a most scholarly man. Throughout his life he gave unstintingly of his time and wisdom to the religious and cultural welfare of the community.

After Dr. Crane's death there was no settled rector until 1874, when Rev. George Allen was appointed. In 1875 the old church was removed and an impressive stone church was erected. It took one year to build, during which time services were held at the Court House. The new St. Luke's was, and is, a beautiful example of neo-Gothic architecture. It is built of Coventry granite. The interior measures eighty-seven by forty-two feet. The five memorial stained glass windows are effective and add to the beauty of the interior. The building cost approximately thirty-two thousand dollars. In 1875 pews were offered for auction. But before the auction the following were offered choice over appraisal: William Goddard, Albert A. Hall, Thomas P. I. Goddard, Dutee Arnold, J. B. Peirce, Samuel Knowles, Dr. James H. Eldredge, Mrs. William Gammell, Richard Thornley, Benjamin Crompton, Henry Rhodes, Benjamin Vaughn, Silas Weaver, Mrs. Rowland Brown, and Dr. Lucius M. Wheeler. These were the parishioners who had made substantial donations to the building fund. In 1895 the Parish House on the corner of Church and Peirce Streets was built and here Sunday school and church affairs have been held ever since.



On Sunday, May 18, 1947, a new chapel, given by the parish in honor of the young men and women of St. Luke's who served their country in the armed forces, was consecrated by Bishop Granville Bennett. The chapel altar was given in memory of George Cook, Jonathan Harwood, Jr. and Robert Edwards Annin, 3rd, three young men who were killed in World War II. This altar, surmounted with a polychromed figure of Christ, is flanked by two stained glass windows depicting the birth and crucifixion of Christ. These windows are memorials to Rev. Charles Meader, a much beloved rector, who served here from 1925 to 1942.

The many men who have been rectors of this church from its organization in 1833 have added much to the church and its property. Outstanding among these were Dr. Daniel Goodwin, rector from 1879 to 1892. The spire and chimes added to the church in the early twenties were given in memory of Dr. Goodwin by his widow. Other outstanding pastors were Dr. Nash, Dr. Crane, Rev. Worthington, Rev. Conover, and Rev. Meader. All these, and the present rector, Rev. John Pickells, have been greatly interested in the civic and cultural growth of the town as well as its spiritual well-being.

#### THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

The history of Roman Catholicism in East Greenwich almost coincides with the beginning of that religion in Rhode Island. The first mass was celebrated in Providence in an old wooden school-house on Sheldon Street, near Benefit Street in the early 1800's. The first Catholic church in this state was St. Mary's, Pawtucket, built in 1829. It was not until 1837 that the Cathedral was built in Providence. At that time there were three hundred Catholics in the whole city.

The Church of Our Lady of Mercy, East Greenwich, traces its beginning to the Irish immigration of 1840-50. This increased the Catholic population of this town as it did in other parts of Rhode Island and New England. In September, 1853, Rev. Patrick Lenihan, the first resident pastor, designated a house on Main Street to serve as both church and rec-



tory. This house still stands just north of Murray's Drug Store. Father Lenihan had a small flock in East Greenwich, and had the rest of South County as his mission. The church was named "Church of the Holy Name of Jesus" and kept that name for fifteen years. At Father Lenihan's death in 1857, there were one hundred Catholics in this town.

For the next ten years the parish was attended from Phenix by Fathers Couch and Wallace. They used as a church a house on Marlborough Street, more recently a part of the McGiveney property. Father Couch bought land for a new church on Main Street and a resident pastorate was restored in 1867 with the coming of Rev. William Hart. The present church was started in September, 1867, and the first Mass was offered in the basement on Christmas day of the same year. The church was dedicated by Bishop McFarland.

At this period, the parish boundaries were from St. Michael's Church in Providence to St. Michael's in Pawcatuck, Connecticut. The baptismal register shows infants baptized from Wakefield to Conimicut. Rev. Thomas Kane was pastor in 1868 and, upon his transfer, Rev. Wm. Halligan was appointed in 1872. During Father Halligan's pastorate, St. Catherine's Church in Apponaug and St. Bernard's Church in Wickford were built. In 1888, while Rev. Owen Clark was pastor, the present rectory was built. When the Rev. Thomas Fitzpatrick succeeded him in 1899, the parish covered twenty-five miles.

Rev. Peter Malone was next appointed pastor in 1904. The church at this time had its entrance at street level. In 1905 Father Malone had the church raised ten feet, making room for an auditorium in the basement, and it was at this time that the tower was added to the church. It was intended that there should also be a bell, but the depression of 1907 put the church in financial straits and Father Malone was worried into stopping work on the edifice. In 1918 Rev. Wm. Houghton was appointed pastor. When he was transferred in 1924, Rev. James Kelly assumed his duties. At Father Kelly's death in 1926, Rev. James J. Trainor succeeded him.

In 1927 one of the parishioners died and left the church some seven thousand dollars. Father Trainor, with this money, had an entirely new sanctuary made, imported a beautiful marble altar from Pietasanta, Italy, and with added donations, renovated and redecorated the church. Father Trainor died in 1943. He was succeeded by Rev. Joseph Devanny. The present pastor is Rev. Francis Brady, who has supervised many improvements and additions to the church property. Outstanding are the new parochial school, built in 1950 on Third Avenue, and the convent, formerly the property of Hugh McGraw, located on first Avenue.

Thus the Catholics of East Greenwich have reason to be proud of the part their church has played in the growth of the town. Stepping into its second century in East Greenwich, the church is devoted now, as she has ever been, to the best traditions of our common American heritage.

#### THE FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

In 1874, forty-one persons of Swedish extraction met to form a Lutheran church. The first church edifice was erected on Spring Street. It was built by William R. Kenyon, a local carpenter, but the entire interior was finished by parishioners. The church was dedicated on December 11, 1874. This building still stands and is now the Boy Scout Hall. The first parsonage was built on Spencer Avenue in 1893. In 1904 the parsonage and land were sold to Daniel A. Peirce. Later Luke Connole bought the parsonage and had it moved to the East Greenwich side of Division Street. It is now owned by Mrs. C. Edward Johnson.

In 1904 the church society bought land owned by Carl Bergstrom on the corner of Division and Brayton Streets. The building committee was composed of Andrew Pearson, A. J. Peterson, Claus Shogren, and Oscar Falk. The cornerstone was laid August 13, 1905.

Then a fine parsonage was built, just behind the church edifice on Brayton Street. In 1955 the church purchased the Tanner house, on the southeast corner of Division and Bray-

ton Streets, and converted it into a parish house. Various pastors have come and gone through the years. The Rev. Martin Englund was here from 1899 to 1909; Rev. Axel Lawson succeeded him and remained until 1920; Rev. Albert Hallington came here in 1927 and served until 1950. The present pastor is Rev. Norman Henry, who succeeded the Rev. Carl Anderson in 1955.

In 1943 it was voted to change the name from Swedish Lutheran Church to First Evangelical Lutheran Church. The church now has over three hundred and fifty members, and a staff of fourteen teachers and officers in the Sunday School. The Swedish population in East Greenwich may well be proud of the fine property they have acquired through the years as well as the many outstanding citizens included in their church membership.

#### THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

Until 1894 the Swedish people of this town worshiped together in the little church on Spring Street. But when some of the members voted to join the Augustana Synod, others decided to separate themselves from the group and founded what eventually became the Evangelical Covenant Church. It was first called the Evangelical Mission Church, and its members met in homes or at the Baptist, Methodist, or Free Will Baptist Church. The Rev. B. B. Sathers came down from Crompton to hold services.

Charter members of the church were Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Timander, Mr. and Mrs. Claus Sandquist, Mr. G. Bergdahl, Mrs. Charlotte Barry, William Barry, Frank Johnson, Anna Linderson, Hulda Bergden, M. R. Anderson, Mrs. August Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Gustaf Anderson, Mary Johnson, Mrs. Claus Williams, Mrs. Ida Krans, Elizabeth Anderson, Gerda Anderson, Charles O. Lawson, John Johnson and Johanna Brundin. Of these, only Mary Johnson, now of Springfield, Massachusetts, is still living.

In 1895 a church building was built and dedicated on the corner of Division and Rector Streets. Since that time,



fourteen pastors have served the church. The Rev. A. O. Peterson was here from 1903 to 1919; Rev. Harold Carlson from 1930 to 1939. More recently, Rev. Thure G. Ohlson, 1944 to 1948; Rev. Walter Wilson, 1949 to 1952; and the present pastor, Rev. John T. Carlson. In 1918 a rectory to accommodate the rector and his family was built on Mawney Street.

The church is a member of the Eastern Missionary Association and the Evangelical Mission Covenant of America. In over sixty years of existence in East Greenwich, this church has built up a faithful congregation and a fine Sunday School.

#### THE MARLBOROUGH STREET CHAPEL

William Northup Sherman, editor of the *R. I. Pendulum*, in 1872 erected at his own expense the Marlborough Street Chapel. The church stood, as the building does today, on the southeast corner of Long and Marlborough Streets. It was originally called the Independent Baptist Church. It seated three hundred people, had a pipe and reed organ and boasted the finest tone bell in town.

The church group was formed in 1874 and there were then sixty members. Mr. Sherman's purpose in building and supporting the church was, to quote him: "that many persons in this village are unable to purchase a pew or hire a seat in any of the churches here, but at the Friend's Meeting House or at the Marlborough Street Chapel they can worship whenever they chose, free of expense."

Mr. Sherman and his wife had shocked their neighbors by having Negro children into their home on Sunday afternoons to teach them to read and to introduce them to the Bible. The Negroes lived in a long row of one story shacks on Marlborough Street, known as "Nigger's Row". One night the whole row of houses burned and the families were left destitute. The Shermans came to the rescue and secured food and shelter for all of them. Mr. Sherman then purchased the site of the shacks and had the chapel built.



Negroes and whites both were members of the congregation and although there was no appointed minister, many interesting speakers were heard at the chapel. This church was sometime called the Union Baptist Church.

During the early years of its existence the chapel became a popular place, especially on Sunday evenings, when the Negroes, ever renowned for their mellow voices, sang old hymns and plantation melodies. Among the favorites were: "If You Get There Before I Do, Tell Him That I'm Coming", "Tote the Young Lambs in your Bosom and let the Old Sheep Go", and "Climbing up the Golden Stairs". These and many others were sung to the rhythm of clapping hands and stamping feet. Their voices could be heard clear up to Main Street. Surely the Lord must have heard them and they have long since climbed those golden stairs.

A strong-minded man was William N. Sherman, with a sense of civic responsibility, an aggressive nature and a newspaper to state and justify his position, Mr. Sherman can take his place in East Greenwich history as our first crusading intergrationist.

#### THE WESTMINSTER UNITARIAN CHURCH

The newest church in East Greenwich is the Westminster Unitarian Church. The members of this congregation purchased in 1958, the Myles Standish house on Kenyon Avenue, site of the old Dr. Thomas Spencer house.

The Rev. I. Gregg Carter was appointed their first pastor. The group has plans for building a new church in the area in the near future.

#### THE JEMIMAKINS

All of the religious groups mentioned so far were orthodox religious societies, free from any label of charlatanism. But there was a flurry of unorthodoxy in town in the eighteenth century that is worthy of mention.

In the long span of our town's history, many persons have come here and then later gone to other parts of the country

to settle. Most of them leave an impression of one sort or another, but few are so colorful that they build up, over the years, an aura of charm and personality that is startling. Such a character was Jemima Wilkinson.

In reading about her it is difficult to cull the real truth from the legends that have survived her through one hundred and eighty years. Of the early facts of her life we are fairly certain. She was born in Cumberland, Rhode Island, November 29, 1752, the eighth child in a Quaker family of twelve. Her father, Jeremiah, was a well-to-do farmer and her mother, the former Amy Whipple, came from an old and respected Rhode Island family. Amy Wilkinson died when Jemima was eight years old and Jemima grew up, according to history, as a "neglected, indolent and wilful child". Today we would probably label her a problem child. She was a handsome youngster, headstrong, and for that period, a bit on the giddy side. In spite of her frivolous ways, she was an avid reader of the Bible and could quote it at length.

When she was twenty-four, a crisis occurred which was to change the course of her own life and the lives of many others. In 1776 she fell ill with typhus and lay motionless for thirty-six hours, apparently unconscious. Her physician, according to legend, pronounced her dead. But suddenly she awakened and, in solemn tones, proclaimed that she had died and was risen from the dead. She asserted that her human soul had gone to heaven and that her earthly body was now animated by the spirit of Jesus Christ, so that she would never die again but, after one thousand years, be taken to heaven. She convinced many people of her claims, and with some of her followers (including her own sisters) traveled through this state. She preached at Newport, North and South Kingstown and in East Greenwich, making converts everywhere. She named herself "The Publick Universal Friend".

In the "History of East Greenwich" by Daniel Greene, he tells of Jemima's appearance as it was told to him by one who knew her well:

"She was taller than middle stature, ~~fine~~ form, fair complexion, with florid cheeks, dark and very brilliant eyes and beautiful white teeth. Her hair, dark auburn, or black, was combed from the seam on the top of her head, and fell on her shoulders in three full ringlets. In her public addresses she would rise up and stand perfectly still for a minute or more, then proceed with a slow distinct enunciation. She spoke with great ease, and with increasing fluency, her voice clear and harmonious and manner persuasive and emphatic; her dress rich in material but plain in make, and in a style entirely her own; a broad-brimmed white beaver hat with low crown, and the sides, when she rode, turned down and tied under the chin; a full, light drab cloak or mantle, with a unique underdress, and cravat around her neck, with square ends that fell to her waist in front. On horseback her appearance was imposing".

Thus it becomes evident that Jemima had all the attributes of a spellbinder: good looks, mental agility and earnestness. Although many disagreed with her tenets, there have been few aspersions cast on her personal character, her morals, or her sincerity of purpose. Jemima differed from Ann Lee and other New England religious enthusiasts whose followers were among the ignorant and credulous, in that she attracted practical and intelligent supporters. Judge William Potter of South Kingstown, a most solid citizen, was one of her most ardent followers. He had a fine estate near Kingston Hill and built a large addition to his mansion for the accommodation of Jemima and her retinue who made it their headquarters for six years. Another devotee was Stephen Hopkins, governor of Rhode Island and signer of the Declaration of Independence; and also Joshua Babcock, a friend of both Benjamin Franklin and George Washington and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island. Although Judge Babcock never joined the Universal Friend's Society officially, he contributed materially to her work, and his Westerly home was her headquarters when she came to that town.

In the East Greenwich area, George Spencer of Frenchtown was Jemima's most devoted convert. He was instrumental in having a chapel built where she could hold services. This chapel, since demolished, stood on South County Trail

across from where Bostitch is now. For many years it was known as the Jemima Meeting House.

Jemima also met her congregation at the farm which belonged to the Holden family and is now the property of the Eldredge family. It was here that Jemima held the crowd spellbound when she prophesied that one in her audience would not see the light of another day. That evening an old colored man who lived with the Holden family did die, and this coincidence increased her fame.

From Rhode Island, Jemima and some of her group went to Ledyard, Connecticut, and from there journeyed to Pennsylvania where she made her headquarters for two or three years at Worcester, just outside of Philadelphia. William Potter of South Kingstown left his wife to follow Jemima and to assist her in her work.

Leaving Pennsylvania in 1789, Jemima and her people journeyed to the Seneca Lake district of upper New York state to settle thirty-six square miles of land which she had purchased. There she established "New Jerusalem", which was to be their "land of milk and honey". But her followers, called upon to endure many hardships, found the bitter winters trying. Jemima ruled with a rod of iron, punishing transgressors in various ways. One follower, accused of "impertinent curiosity", was sentenced to wear for three weeks a small bell suspended from his neck by a rope. Many wrongdoers were punished by a silent fast.

In the new settlement her followers assumed Scriptural names, such as "Prophet Daniel", "John the Beloved", and "Enoch of Old". These people never spoke of Jemima by name and never used the pronoun denoting her sex. They spoke of "The Friend's House", "The Friend's Carriage", etc.

In Yates County, New York, just outside of Penn Yan, stands the home of Jemima Wilkinson, built in 1809. The house, now a private residence, has been restored to its original beautiful simplicity. It took seven years to build the house with its ten fire-places and an entrance hall forty feet long by ten feet wide. Jemima planned it so that she could



stand on the stair-landing and preach with part of her audience on the second floor and the rest in the lower hall.

Jemima died in 1819 and her remains were kept for some time for her followers to view. Her final resting place was known only to a few of the faithful, who passed the secret along to a few chosen ones of the next generation. So Jemima lived only sixty-seven of the thousand years to which she aspired. Without her firm leading hand, the Jemimakins soon dissolved and the members were absorbed into other church denominations. But in and around Penn Yan, New York, are families named Briggs, Spencer, Potter, etc., all Rhode Island names, bearing testimony to the existence of the religious colony.

Riding side-saddle through the history of East Greenwich, we envision Jemima, resplendent in beaver hat and flowing cloak, a colorful and unforgettable woman, the Public Universal Friend.



KENT COUNTY COURT HOUSE — 1806

## CHAPTER XIV

### *Local Public Institutions and Town Government*

This town is in the Second Congressional District of the State of Rhode Island. It has one senator and one representative in the State Legislature. There are three voting districts in the town. East Greenwich itself is operated on the old town meeting plan, so common throughout New England.

The highest authority here is the Town Council, composed of the president and four other members. J. William Corr, Jr. is the current president. His father also served as member of the Council for many years. Others who served many years on the Council were: George R. Hanaford, Thomas J. Freeman and Raymond Crompton. Members of the Council are elected for two years. The Council supervises

the police and highway departments, as well as utilities and finance. Some town officials also serve as members of the Board of Canvassers and members of the Probate Court. Council meetings are held monthly at the Town Hall, on the last Thursday of the month.

The financial town meeting is held annually on the second Tuesday in March, at the Varnum Armory. Owners of personal property and real estate are qualified to vote.

The town has a school committee, whose members serve without pay. The group is comprised of a chairman, five members and a clerk. Mrs. Ruth Brown, who retired in 1959, served as school clerk for thirty years. School committee members are also elected biennially and serve for four years.

Politically, East Greenwich has long been a Republican stronghold. Sometimes one candidate runs on both tickets. Miss Helen Anderson, Town Clerk, and Herbert J. Couper, Town Treasurer, have done so for a number of years, to the satisfaction of both Democrats and Republicans.

### THE TOWN HALL

In 1886 the present Town Hall was erected to house the offices of the Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, and the Police Department. The architect was John B. Goodwin of Providence. Mr. L. C. Shippee was the local builder. The cost of the structure was about seven thousand five hundred dollars. The taxpayers had voted six thousand dollars for the building and were most unhappy when the cost exceeded that amount.

An article in the Rhode Island *Pendulum* of 1886 calls the architectural style "Queen Anne" and it is certainly unpretentious enough to qualify for that period. The building is two stories high with a seventy foot tower. The Seth Thomas clock in the tower bears the following inscription: "Placed in position and presented to the Town of East Greenwich, R. I., June, 1886, by Mary Sherman, in memory of her husband, William Northup Sherman, who died March 2nd. 1882". Mr. Sherman was owner and editor of the *Pendulum*. The bell, which weighs twelve hundred pounds, has tolled

off the hours for over seventy years and the sound is as familiar to local residents as the chiming of their own clocks at home.

The Town Hall was formerly the voting place in town, but now, since the advent of voting machines, the Varnum Armory is more adaptable. Meetings of the Town Council are held at the Town Hall, as are other meetings pertaining to the affairs of town government.

### THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Law and order came to East Greenwich with the early settlers. The first Town Sergeant was John Spencer, who was a "first" in so many capacities that he surely must have been an acknowledged leader. Thomas Dungan was Town Sergeant in 1678. In 1685 the job was held by John Knight, whose father, Richard Knight, had been keeper of the prison in Newport.

The position of Town Sergeant was not a remunerative one nor was the post of Chief of Police. The men who served the town as chiefs did so on a part-time basis. They were John Murray, William Cassidy, Leander Babcock, Thomas Smith, Walter Mott and Carl Straight.

In 1926 the Town Council, cognizant of the fact that the town was growing and in need of a full-time police force, asked the State Police to lend them Harold Benson, one of their troopers. They complied with the request. Acting-Chief Benson patrolled the town during the day. Charles R. Johnson was the night man. In 1928 Benson was appointed Chief of Police and East Greenwich, at long last, had a permanent police force.

Chief Benson resigned in 1946 and Charles R. Johnson was appointed Chief, a position which he held until his retirement in 1956. Once again the town turned to the State Police for the loan of another trooper, Arthur Newton, who filled in until John Anderson retired from the State Police and came here to be chief in 1957. Anderson resigned in 1959 and a new Chief, John F. Ryan, was appointed to succeed him.



The regular police force now numbers ten men, including Chief Ryan, three lieutenants and six patrolmen. The headquarters of the police are at the Town Hall. The force is alert and well-equipped. It fulfills its duties in a creditable manner.

### KENT COUNTY COURT HOUSE

In the early colonial villages, court sessions and town meetings were held in any convenient spot. In this respect East Greenwich was no exception as private homes and local taverns were often used for this purpose. In Providence, court was held, at one time, under a tree beside the water, and this could have happened here, too. Rules of the court, no matter where the sessions were held, were firm and concise. Among early Rhode Island judges were: Roger Williams, John Clarke, William Coddington, and Samuel Gorton. All meetings were required to begin at eight o'clock in the morning "at the farthest".

In 1729 the colony was divided into three counties: Newport, Providence and King's. East Greenwich was included, with Providence and Warwick, as part of Providence County. In 1750 the towns of East Greenwich, Warwick, West Greenwich, and Coventry were set off as Kent County. East Greenwich was designated as the county seat. Plans were made to build a Court House in this town. In August, 1750, John Peirce, Town Clerk, executed a deed giving his own lot #8, at the corner of Main and Court Streets, as a site for the new Court House. A building was erected on this lot, a small structure but adequate for the time. Sessions were held here until 1805.

In 1803 the Rhode Island Assembly voted to build a new Court House on the same lot. In 1804 the old Court House was sold at public auction. A committee, composed of Benjamin Howland, Oliver Wickes and Pardon Tillinghast, was appointed to survey the land and advise as to its desirability as a site for the new building. As result of the survey, the Assembly voted to build the new Court House on the same site. In

February, 1806, the building committee, composed of Benjamin Howland of East Greenwich and George Arnold and Henry Remington of Warwick, reported completion of the structure at a total cost of \$13,803.67. The actual building of the Court House was done by Oliver Wickes, a Revolutionary War veteran, who lived on the northeast corner of Peirce and Melrose Streets.

Taking into consideration the small area of the territory of Kent County, the small population at that time (9,384) and the rarity of large buildings then, it is rather surprising that this Court House should have been so spacious, so convenient, and so attractively designed.

It was, and still is, colonial style at its finest. A stone basement forms a rugged foundation for the two stories of wood. A broad flight of stone steps leads to the entrance, which is beneath a small, squarely-built portico. Inside, to the right, is the large court room where Common Pleas and Superior Court trials are held. The office of the clerk and the District Court room are part of the plan. On the second floor are rooms for small hearings. The basement houses the rooms for the Probation Officers and also the lock-up for prisoners awaiting trial.

Around this building, in colonial times, revolved the life of East Greenwich and the whole of Kent County. Here stood the pillory where wrongdoers were punished; here too the excited populace was read the Declaration of Independence in 1776; and here, too, the young lawyer, Jacob Campbell, read to them the Treaty of Peace between England and the United States in 1783.

Henry Turner, in his "Reminiscences of East Greenwich", recalls the glorious time of Court Week in August of each year. "when the whole population took a holiday, and the streets were lined with wagons, many drawn by brood mares with little colts en suite; or after the court had concluded its labors and begun to bear fruit in the victims of the whipping post and pillory, as in those days it rarely failed to do."

The Liberty Pole, which bore the emblem of independence, stood on the Court House lawn and often served as a whipping post. Just in front of the Court House, at street level, stood the town pump, which afforded a means of disciplining some who had celebrated, not wisely, but too well.

Pillory and whipping post are long gone from their old places. Instead, on the Court House lawn is a fine war memorial, paying tribute to those who fought in World War I. The memorial to veterans of World War II is at the Memorial Stadium near Eldredge School. Gone, too, is the town pump and watering trough. This was moved some years ago to the Lucius Eldredge, Jr. farm on Division Street.

Such eminent lawyers as Nathan Whiting, James Mitchell Varnum, Albert Collins Greene, William G. Bowen, William E. Peck, Patrick H. Quinn, and many others, equally eminent, here pleaded causes most eloquently. Jurists of the highest character and ability have presided here through over one hundred and fifty years. This building in the town of East Greenwich has been, and continues to be, a source of great pride to the people of Kent County.

#### KENT COUNTY JAIL

Closely tied with the history of the Court House is the Kent County Jail. The first jail in town, built in 1780, was situated on the southwest corner of Marlborough and Queen Streets. It is now a two-family house.

The second Kent County Jail was built in 1804. Located at the foot of King Street, facing the Court House at the top of the hill, it served as a county jail for one hundred and fifty years. The jail consisted of a two story frame building. It had living quarters for the jailers and, of course, cells for the prisoners.

In its hey-day there were two images, thirty inches high, carved of wood, and placed above the front entrance to the jail. They represented a black man and a white man, one a robber and the other a murderer, both handcuffed, indicating that equal justice was meted out to all. The jail, at that time, was painted yellow and figures stood out plainly even from

the top of King Street, as there was no railroad bridge there to cut off the view. One of these figures is in the collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society and is considered by experts to be one of the most significant works of woodcarving of the colonial period.

Squire Wall was sheriff and keeper of the jail in the early part of the nineteenth century and the Place family served in that capacity, generation after generation. John Place, who died in 1872, and his brother, Earl, were the first of the Places to be jailers. Then John E., son of Earl Place, assumed the duties. His young daughter, Everlin, was only ten years old when she came to live at the jail with her family. Later she married Jotham Smith, who succeeded John E. Place as keeper. When Jotham died six years later, Mrs. Smith was named jailer. At that time she was the only woman jailer in the United States. She served in that capacity for over fifty years. Her daughter, Mrs. Mary Burdick, followed Mrs. Smith as keeper and Frank A. Burdick, her grandson, served for several years, resigning in 1928. All in all, the Place-Smith-Burdick families were keepers of the Kent County Jail for almost one hundred years.

Commitments to the prison through the years have been many. After the State Institutions were built at Howard, much of the burden was lifted from this small jail. It is interesting, in reading old records, to notice that one family in East Greenwich had the dubious distinction of being represented by six generations of their family as inmates of the jail!

In 1957 the jail was abandoned by the State of Rhode Island. The last jailer, Frederick Sunderlund, turned the key in the lock for the last time in June of that year. By an early deed, the property reverted in ownership to the town of East Greenwich, instead of to the state or county.

#### THE TOWN FARM

Concern for the needy began to show itself in the Town Council records of 1802. Pardon Tillinghast and Thomas



Fry were named as a committee to look for a suitable house for a town asylum. Their search was unsuccessful but finally, in 1810, Walter Spencer offered his home to the needy at a cost of twenty-five dollars a year to the town of East Greenwich. For an additional twenty-five cents a week, he would take care of Anthony Spencer, who was evidently insane.

The arrangement with Walter Spencer lasted until 1848, when the town again appointed a committee. It was comprised of Ezra Pollard, Thomas Tilley, and Gorton Spencer. They came up with results, for in that year the town purchased from George Kenyon seventeen acres of land, the so-called Vaughn plot, for thirteen hundred dollars. Action was in order and a house and barn were built. The house still stands on the south side of First Avenue, just west of Greenwich Cemetery. Equipment, such as farm implements, a wagon, a horse, etc., was purchased and the entire cost, including the buildings, was a little over thirty-eight hundred dollars. A hobo house was built later to accommodate transients. The first keeper of the Town Farm was Gorton Arnold.

In 1852, in a report submitted to the Town Council, there were nineteen inmates at the farm. The following produce was raised: one hundred ninety-three bushels of corn, one hundred bushels of potatoes, thirty bushels of turnips, twenty-nine bushels of carrots, three and one half tons of oats in the straw, two tons of hay, and twelve hundred and sixty pounds of pork. The keeper that year earned a salary of one hundred and ninety-six dollars and twenty-four cents.

In 1863 the Poor Farm was designated as the town pound, where stray stock could be claimed on proof of ownership. The lower part of the barn was used for this purpose. For many years, what is now First Avenue was for obvious reasons, called Asylum Road and is so marked on some old maps.

In the early days the Poor Farm was often crowded. Whole families were obliged to live there. One man, who was injured at Pollard's Mill, was unable to work for a year and found refuge for his wife and five children at the farm. In

the twentieth century, during the last years of its existence, most of the inmates were the aged. For twenty-two years, from 1923, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Card were the keepers of the Town Farm.

The farm outlived its usefulness in these days of planned security and was abandoned as a Town Farm in 1945. The house was sold to the Greenwich Cemetery Corporation for twelve thousand seven hundred dollars. It was then converted to the two-family dwelling which it is today.

#### THE EAST GREENWICH FIRE DEPARTMENT

One of the oldest and smoothest operating volunteer fire departments is in existence in East Greenwich. Up to the time of the formal organization of a fire company in 1797, the town pump, which stood in front of the Court House, was the only means of supply available to the townspeople for quenching a fire. Bucket brigades were formed by willing citizens in case of fire, and one can well imagine their frustration on a cold night in January! But for one hundred and twenty years, from the time the town was founded in 1677 until 1797, this pump and the bucket brigade were the fire department.

In 1797 a fire company was organized. It was composed of volunteers from the town and the following charter was procured from the state legislature:

"Whereas a number of the inhabitants of the compact part of the Town of East Greenwich, including Peirce Street, preferred a petition and represented to this Assembly, that there is no Fire-Engine in the said Town, and that, being greatly impressed with the danger of a fire's breaking out in the said compact part of the said Town, they have formed themselves into a Society to procure a Fire-Engine, with intent to make such regulations, and adopt such measures, as will have a tendency to prevent the calamities consequent upon the breaking out of fire in the said Town; and thereupon prayed this Assembly that a Charter of Incorporation, may be granted them by name of The Fire Engine Company, with the powers necessary to enable them to effect, as far as possible, the purposes for which they have entered into the Society:

Which being duly considered,

Be it enacted by this General Assembly, and by the authority thereof it is hereby enacted, that William Greene, Jonathan Salisbury, Thomas Arnold, Andrew Boyd, David Pinnegar, Caleb Coggeshall, Clarke Brown, William Sweet, Edward Spencer, John Sprague, Benjamin Howland, John Casey, Othniel Wightman, Daniel Peirce, Dan Taylor, Gideon Mumford, Caleb Greene, Philip Peirce, William Arnold, Richard Mathewson, Ezra Simmons, Micah Whitmarsh, Oliver Wickes, Peleg Olin, Peter Turner, James Miller, Henry Niles, James Peirce, Samuel Tripp, Benjamin Winslow, John Glazier, Nicholas R. Gardner, Jonathan Niles, James Greene and Caleb Weeden, being the aforesaid petitioners, and all others who shall by them be admitted as members of their Company, be, and they are hereby constituted, erected and made a body politic and corporate, to subsist at all time forever hereafter in Deed and name, by the Name of the Fire-Engine Company; and by that Name, shall and may have perpetual succession; and forever hereafter shall be a company, or Persons, able, capable, and liable to sue and be sued, to plead and be impleaded, to answer and be answered unto, to defend and be defended against, in all or any of the Courts of Law, or otherwise, before any of the Judges, Justices, or other persons whomsoever, in all manner of actions or pleas whatsoever; and may hold property by gift, grant, or otherwise, in the name of their treasurer.

And for the well governing and ordering the affairs of the said Company, it is further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That it shall and may be lawful for the said Company, and their Successors, to assemble and meet together on the first Monday in June, every year, in order to choose a treasurer and such other officers as they shall think necessary or expedient, and also proper persons to work the said Engine, and to transact the business of the Company.

It is further Enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all monies ordered to be raised by the said Company, for the purchase and support of the said Engine, shall be voted by a majority of the said Company, and be assessed and levied upon the whole of the inhabitants of the compact part of the said Town of East Greenwich, including Peirce Street, in proportion to the valuation of the estate of each and every person, in assessment in

State and Town Taxes; And that all other persons being inhabitants of the Town of Warwick, who shall join said Company, shall at all time be assessed in proportion to the sum total of their estates as given at the time of their subscribing, so long as they shall retain property equal thereto.

It is further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That, in all cases of neglect or refusal to pay the taxes which shall be so assessed, application shall be made to a Justice of the Peace in the said Town of East Greenwich, who shall issue his warrant, authorizing any proper officer, in the County of Kent, to distrain so much of the personal property of the person so neglecting or refusing as will satisfy and pay such tax and cost, and to sell the same within three days later distrain made, at Public auction, unless the same shall be previously redeemed by the delinquent; and that if any overplus sum shall remain upon the sale of such property, after deducting the sum due for the said tax, together with all costs, it shall be returned to the delinquent.

And it is further Enacted by the Authority, aforesaid, That for the well governing of the said Company, they be, and hereby are authorized, when legally assembled, to make such By-laws as to them shall appear necessary for the regulation and government of the said Company; provided such By-laws be not repugnant to the Laws of the State."

Since the date of its issuance in 1797, this charter has been revised to fit the times, but it remains basically the same. When the first fire company was formed, a large fountain was built. It was on Division Street, almost directly opposite where the Swedish Lutheran Church now stands. Bored logs for the transmission of water from the fountain were laid through the principal streets of the town. For apparatus, the fire company had a round tub with a hand pump and hose. This tub had to be kept full of water by the bucket brigade. so the progress was still mighty slow. Every person whose property was insured by the Providence Mutual Insurance Company (and it was the only insurance company in the state for many years) had to keep a pair of buckets ready for use in case of fire.

In 1881 the Columbia Hose Company was formed. Internal strife broke up this brigade in 1884 and, for a short



time, the town had no organized protection. In response to a plea by local residents, the company was re-formed. So, in the late 1880's there was a sizable company in town. The department was divided into three units: Hose Company #1, Hose Company #2, and the Hook and Ladder Company. The equipment of the hose companies consisted of a hand reel pulled by the men, while the hook and ladder group pulled the ladder truck by ropes. This truck also carried long pipes which were lowered into wells, so that, by means of suction, water could be drawn. The Columbia Hose Company used a barn on Montrose Street for its station. The barn stood directly behind what is now the Baptist Church House. At this period in their history the firemen when on parade, wore navy blue trousers, red shirts and dark caps. In the early part of the 1900's, the fire company was officially known as the East Greenwich Hook and Ladder Company.

The so-called "Firemen's Muster" is a New England institution which plays a large part in the history of the fire department of East Greenwich. These "musters" are competitive contests between fire-company teams operating the old-time hand pumps. The object is to decide which team can, by manpower, pump the water the greatest number of feet. The East Greenwich Fire Company has been singularly efficient in this respect and they are known throughout New England for their prowess in this sport. The first muster held in this town was on September 2, 1912. Our own pump, the "Volunteer #4", was built in Peabody, Massachusetts, in 1854. It was originally a single air chamber engine, but was rebuilt to its present state in 1860. From Peabody the pump went to Derry, New Hampshire, and from there to Central Falls, R. I. The East Greenwich Veteran's Firemen's Association purchased it in 1913, and it has been the pride and joy of the company these many years. Preceding each muster the brass on the pumper is shined to a dazzling brilliance and every inch is checked to have the pump in perfect order. The record for the "Volunteer" is two hundred and fifty-three feet and six inches, pumped at Everett, Massachusetts, in 1928. The pump has been in numerous musters and

has won money prizes amounting to over fifteen thousand dollars.

In 1914 it was decided that a new fire station should be built on Main Street at the corner of Long Street. It was constructed of brick, covering an area 38 by 70 feet, with concrete foundation and basement. Since then an addition has been made on the north end to accommodate two more trucks, to provide quarters for night men, and to supply an office.

In September, 1927, in celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of East Greenwich, the firemen held a muster here. It was one of the largest ever held in New England. Periodically these musters are held, with various fire companies of New England and New York state participating.

Many local men have served as fire chiefs. The longest, in point of service, was Daniel Masterson. He joined the company in 1886, was elected fire chief in 1913, and served in that capacity for twenty-five years. Running him a close second is the present chief, Frederick Miller, who is completing his twenty-fourth year as chief. There are now one hundred and sixty volunteer firemen in the company and, whether the fire be large or small, they are a competent team.

The present company is well equipped with three pumpers, a rescue wagon, and a new aerial ladder truck. Frenchtown, Station #2, was recently opened and is manned by local residents of the area. They have a pumper and a ladder truck. One of the pumpers at the East Greenwich station is especially designed and equipped for country and forest fires. It has a large tank which will hold six hundred and forty gallons of water.

For a number of years, and at present, the uniform of the firemen consists of a blue serge suit, gold buttons on the coat, gray shirt, black tie, visored cap and white gloves. The men have won many awards for their smart appearance on parade.

The people of East Greenwich have reason to be grateful to their fire company. It has grown from a bucket brigade to a well-organized and efficient fire department. It has voluntarily served the community well and it can be justly proud of its one hundred and sixty-four years of service and tradition.

#### EAST GREENWICH VISITING NURSE AND ANTI-TUBERCULOSIS ASSOCIATION

Another fine public service organization, the Visiting Nurse Association, was begun in the latter part of 1909. The Association was not actually formed until February 10, 1910, when a third meeting was held at St. Luke's Parish House. The founders were Rev. William Worthington, Dr. Fenwick G. Taggart, Mrs. John Ormsbee, Mrs. Hiram Kendall, Rev. J. P. Malone, Mr. and Mrs. H. V. Allen, Mrs. George Butts, Mrs. Thomas Boardman, and Mrs. William Taylor.

The first duty of the group was to engage a visiting nurse. Miss Kathryn Fitzpatrick, a graduate of Boston Training School for District Nursing, was hired for seventy dollars per month. The headquarters were first at Eastman Hall on the East Greenwich Academy property. Later, quarters were moved to a house on South Main Street, owned by A. J. Benjamin. They remained there until February 1, 1924, at which time the quarters were moved to the present location just south of the Varnum Armory.

The early years were difficult to finance. Cake sales and whist parties were organized to aid the cause. The nurse made one thousand and forty-two calls the first year. Fifty cents was the charge made to those who could afford it.

The first officers elected were: Howard V. Allen, president; Father Malone, Dr. Taggart, and Mrs. Ormsbee, vice-presidents; Mrs. Hiram Kendall, secretary, and Wm. Browning, treasurer. Mr. Browning held this post until his death in 1929, at which time Herbert J. Couper took over the office and has served ever since. Col. H. V. Allen has served as president since the founding of the association.

In 1924 the Nursing Association purchased the first car for the use of the nurse. In 1925 the group was incorporated. Several funds have assisted in carrying on this fine work, namely, the Christmas seal sale and, more recently, the Community and United Funds.

In 1913 Miss Fitzpatrick resigned. She was succeeded by Miss Molly U. McGinn, a graduate of Butler Hospital in Providence. Miss McGinn has served this community ever since. In carrying out her duties with kindness and efficiency, she has endeared herself to several generations of East Greenwich-ites. She worked alone for many years, driving in all kinds of weather to out-of-the-way homes on the outskirts of the town. In later years she has been assisted by Mrs. Harold Mellor, who is also school nurse.

### THE POST OFFICE

According to official records, the first post office in East Greenwich was established in 1789, one of the first in the nation. Samuel Osgood, first Postmaster General of the United States, in his report of January, 1790, lists four Rhode Island post offices, namely: East Greenwich, Newport, Providence, and South Kingstown.

In 1792 Gideon Mumford made his report to the government as the first postmaster in this town. In 1804 John Mawney was appointed to the post and, oddly enough, his home, situated on the Warwick side of Division Street, served as the post office. He was postmaster for thirty-seven years. He was succeeded by the following: James Greene, 1841; James Slocum, 1853; Hazard Carder, 1857; Christopher Shippee, 1871; Thomas Tilley, 1879; John Galvin, 1887; L. Clarence Reeves, 1892; John H. Keelin, 1896; Nathaniel H. Brown, 1900; Thomas Galvin, 1913; Henry D. Banks, 1922; and James R. Brennan, the present postmaster, who was appointed in 1934.

In 1800 there was a tri-weekly mail. It was delivered by stagecoach, which carried passengers from Kingston to Providence one day and returned the next. The number of houses in town doubled between 1840 and 1870 and, by that time,



there were eighteen trains arriving and departing every twenty-four hours.

The post office was first situated at the Mawney house on the northwest corner of Division Street and the Post Road. Later, it was where Maille's Bakery now stands. For a number of years it was in the Masonic Building, until 1932, when the present modern structure was built on the corner of Main and Division Streets.



SCALLOPTOWN

## CHAPTER XV    📖    📖    📖    📖

### *The Old Port of East Greenwich— Its Fishing Industry and Scalloptown—Rhode Island's Barbary Coast*

In pre-Revolutionary days, East Greenwich was a bright star in the shipping sphere and residents of the town had great hopes for its future. Large sea-going vessels docked here regularly as they returned from the West Indies, carrying cargoes of sugar and molasses. Cargoes of rum were taken on a round of trading ports on the African coast and the West Indian islands. It was not uncommon for European ports to be visited. Records show that the ships owned by Silas Casey of East Greenwich, the "Juno" and the "Levant", often traded in Europe.

Slave trading was prevalent and "black cargo" was unloaded on the East Greenwich waterfront. More often, slaves were delivered directly to Newport, Bristol, or some southern port. Captains Benjamin and Samuel Fry, among others of this town, imported many slaves from Africa and from the Barbadoes. This was a legitimate business as late as 1808, and trading rum for slaves on the African coast and the Barbadoes was common practice.

Family fortunes were amassed quickly by early Rhode Island shipowners. Probably the best known and most successful of the early merchant princes of this area was Colonel William Arnold. Col. Arnold was born here in 1739. He was the owner of the Bunch of Grapes Tavern, later the Updike Inn. In 1765 Col. Arnold married Alice Wilcox and, by this marriage, had two sons, Stephen, born in 1765, and Perry, born in 1772. Both these boys became sea captains and partners in their father's business. Captain Perry Arnold was renowned as a particularly fine mariner. The Arnolds employed two brigs and one schooner in trading with the West Indies and the Dutch island of Surinam, now known as Dutch Guiana. Col. Arnold died here in 1816. His sons continued the concern for a few years after his death, but in 1819 Captain Perry Arnold, while in command of the "Commodore Perry", was lost at sea. The Arnold dynasty died with him.

Other foreign traders in East Greenwich were General Silas Casey, who has been mentioned as a European trader and was highly esteemed as a business man; the men in the firm of Crary, Fry and Bentley: Col. Archibald Crary, Revolutionary War veteran, Capt. Benjamin Fry, grandson of Thomas Fry, our early settlers, and Capt. Christopher Bentley, an old India captain and a native of East Greenwich. This firm was not as successful as that of Arnold and Sons.

During the years between the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, when shipping was booming in our little port, the shoreline of the town differed from the present line. In those early years, there was at least ten feet of water where there is dry land today. A large schooner could tie up at Jail Wharf and some were so big that their bowsprits reached in as far as where the old Shore Mill (now Reukert Manufacturing Co.) stands today. Sand and gravel sifted down and the channel receded steadily until it became impossible to bring large vessels close to shore.

There were several wharves along the shore in early times. The first one, on the north, was Wanton Casey's. Next came Arnold's Wharf, which was built out on piles over the cove,

probably near what is now called Ferricup Dock or Steamboat Dock. On this wharf was a rugged little building with heavy beams fitted with screws for compressing merchandise. It was here that the ship "Commodore Perry" was built and launched about 1816, under the direction of her first skipper, Captain Silas Holmes. Silas, while here in East Greenwich, met and married Miss Alice Arnold of this village. It was at Arnold's Wharf that the old brig "Lydia and Margarett", abandoned and water-logged, was used as a bathing house and diving board for the boys of the town in the early 1800's.

South of Arnold's Wharf was the Brown and Turner Wharf. There were two storehouses on the wharf. They were good heavy-framed wooden buildings for the storage of goods, both incoming and outgoing. One building was destroyed by fire in 1849. The other was pulled down some years later. The south end of this wharf extended out some twenty or thirty feet into the cove to reach deep water. It was here that sloops and schooners came right in, practically to the shore. Just north of the jail there was another wharf called Glazier's Dock, built in an open space into which the tide flowed. This dock was used, mostly for repairs or building vessels, by Captain Glazier and his son-in-law, Captain Benjamin Davis. London Street, leading down to the shore, had an open space at the foot called "the shipyard", although no ships were built there until 1850, when the schooner "John Howland" was launched.

Jail Wharf was just south of the jail. It was the point of departure for packets bound for Providence and Newport. It was the scene of much activity then, wagons rattling down King Street loaded with all sorts of freight; messengers a-foot speeding to reach the captain and hand him messages to be delivered (often in person); carriages with packet passengers dressed in their finery for the occasion. It must have been a lovely and exciting sight indeed, as the sails of the boats belied in the wind and the pennants whipped their bright colors in the breeze, indicating their readiness to cast off.

Goods from this area for trading elsewhere included mules, horses (with hay pressed in bales to feed them), pota-



toes and other vegetables in hampers made of alder twigs, which held two bushels of produce. These hampers, made expressly for this purpose, came from West Greenwich and were transported to the docks by wagons. There they were purchased and packed by the exporters. Salted fish were also an important part of outgoing cargo.

These were indeed promising times for our little town, and the townsfolk had visions of growing into the largest city on this side of the bay. But, alas, for their dreams, the Embargo Act dispelled them all in one fell swoop. This act and the Non-Importation Law, followed closely by the War of 1812, put a check rein on all maritime enterprise and the town never recovered from the blow. Mr. Madison and his war were most unpopular in East Greenwich! The lofty dreams of East Greenwich as the port city of Rhode Island went by the board as foreign trade dwindled away. With the death of Captain Perry Arnold the town's hopes were really dashed. The ship "Hope" and the brig "Phebe" were the last of the large seagoing vessels owned here.

In 1809 a company was organized here for whale fishery and a whale oil works was built at the foot of Division Street. Some whalers came into the harbor but once again, with the enforcement of the Embargo Act, the hatchet fell and the East Greenwich Whaling Company was no more. Pardon Spencer, in a letter to the *Rhode Island Pendulum*, recalled that in October, 1811, when he was eight years old, Jethro Coffin sailed the "Dauphin" into East Greenwich. The ship was a whaler; she was unloaded, refilled and went to sea again. She fished off the coast of Brazil that winter. In the spring she went to what Mr. Spencer calls "Woodrich Bay" but it was more probably Walvis Bay on the west coast of Africa. She sailed for home in the fall of 1812. The war was then in progress but she made good voyage, eluding the blockade and making safe entry to the port of Stonington, Connecticut. The ship did not return to East Greenwich. With the loss of the two ships, the "Hudson" and the "Dauphin", the oil works closed its doors and many local sea captains took a personal loss.

The packet business was hit by the coming of the railroad in 1837, but trade with Nantucket was retained. Captain Joseph Spencer, owner and commander of the sloop "Mary Nichols", made trips there as long as there was a market for local produce. It was said that the Nantucket market was a most unusual one, as they always wanted watery potatoes and mealy apples, that is, orange potatoes and gillyflowers. They also needed red turnips, cabbage, beets, and dried sweet corn. Until the real winter weather set in, Captain Spencer made his trips, returning with oil and candles which found ready market.

Barter trade was very common between boat captains, farmers, and shopkeepers of the town. A man who had a few bushels of apples or turnips could carry them to Captain Spencer and get in return a supply of oil to last him all winter. Whale oil or sperm oil was used and often delivered in japanned tins. A metal lamp with one wick was a real luxury, compared with tallow dip, which was what most of the householders could afford.

Captain Spencer's trim little sloop, the "Mary Nichols", could often be seen at the wharf at the head of the cove, taking on a cargo of potatoes from the farms in Quidnessett and Potowomut. The sloop drew no less than seven or eight feet of water and could get in and out easily from the head of the cove. This would be impossible now, as there have been many changes in the waters of the upper cove in the last hundred years. Captain Spencer lived near the landing in Potowomut (where the Petteruti family now lives), and was familiarly known as "Cove's Head Joe". He was born in the house on the hill facing the cove, lived there and raised his own family of ten children. He had uncompromising integrity in business dealings and a courtly manner which enhanced his ability as a trader.

Captain Wicks Hill ran a sloop to Albany, bringing back to Newport and East Greenwich such precious staples as flour, butter, etc. from New York state. Captain Hill later turned his hand to the making of beer and became a most successful brewer in Newport.

Other passenger-carrying sloops ran regularly to Newport, Wickford, and Providence. A well-known captain of the time was Howland Greene, native of East Greenwich and father of Dr. Daniel H. Greene. Captain Benjamin Miller ran a sloop between here and Providence. He was washed overboard and drowned off Conimicut Point. His young son, left alone on board, brought the vessel safely home.

With the Embargo Act to spoil the importing trade and the railroad destroying the packet business, the only course left to the sea-minded people was the fishing industry. Thus ended the great East Greenwich vision — the victim of politics, war, and the mechanical progress of the times.

### THE FISHING INDUSTRY

Since its very beginning, the people of the town have wrested some part of their livelihood from the sea. From the waters of Narragansett Bay have been gathered blue fish, squeteague, eels, mackerel, striped bass, scup, tautog, flatfish and, of course, scallops, clams, oysters and quahogs in the shellfish family. Scallops are not as plentiful now as they once were. In 1877 East Greenwich was the leading scallop center in Rhode Island. Oysters were very plentiful in early times and families preserved or, as they put it, "laid in" one hundred bushels for winter consumption. Menhaden was another fish that was very plentiful in the bay area.

In the 1770's Jonathan Salisbury, Joseph and Reynolds Spencer, and Barney Greene owned and employed vessels in trade and cod fishing. Fish were caught and salted on the Newfoundland coast. When they returned, the fish were dried and flaked on Rope Walk Hill. John Fry had a sloop called the "Industry" used for fishing and transportation between here and Nantucket.

With the beginning of the War of 1812 and the enforcement of the Embargo Act, a check was put on foreign trade so that most ships were employed in the fishing industry. Smaller vessels were used to fish off the shoals on Georges Bank for cod, and larger vessels were used to ply the waters

off the straits of Belle Isle and Newfoundland. These voyages, however, became less and less frequent after the war and were given up entirely about 1830-32.

East Greenwich men have "followed the shore" for generation after generation. Whether on large boats or in small skiffs of their own, they have braved the weather through the years to make a living for their families. Joseph H. Gorman, in the 1920's, established a wholesale fish business under the name of King Gorman, Incorporated and ran the White City Fish Market where fresh fish was available daily at his establishment at the foot of Long Street. Later he opened a restaurant there, calling it "Lobstermania", and seafood lovers from near and far came to enjoy the fare.

Quahogs and clams were harvested in quantity year after year, resulting in exhaustion of the supply. The State of Rhode Island stepped in to enforce conservation methods which would insure a continued living for the shell-fishermen. The advent of the Naval Base at Quonset did little to improve the shellfish situation and many complaints of pollution from oil slick have echoed up and down the bay these past few years. It has become necessary for the conservation authorities to close off various parts of the bay area to shellfishing for reasons of pollution or, sometimes, in order to allow reseeded areas to mature.

Any pleasant summer morning, if you rise early (about four o'clock), you can see the small fleet of skiffs going out to "tong" for quahogs, as they have done these many years, and will continue to do in years to come.

#### SCALLOPTOWN — RHODE ISLAND'S BARBARY COAST

As a little girl, the first joke I recall recognizing as such was when a young uncle of mine asked, "Hear about the fellow down in Scalloptown?", making a cutting sound with his mouth and drawing his fore-finger across his throat from ear to ear. "Throat cut?" everyone asked breathlessly. "Nope, dirty neck!" said my clever uncle. That gives you an idea of



the popular conception of the area called Scalloptown — a place where a slit throat was an expected development.

Scalloptown was situated on the shore front, running south of the jail to the foot of London Street. Shacks were built on piles above the water and lined the waterfront in a disreputable, but solid, line. The section was at its awful height between 1890 and 1913, with a population of human flotsam and jetsam. Many were without visible means of support. Women of low character boldly set up their abodes and attracted the lowest elements to the area. Men who were boys in the early 1900's tell about taking a rowboat into the cove on Saturday nights and spending the evening viewing, from a safe distance, the goings-on at Scalloptown. Fights were numerous, dead bodies were found floating beneath piers, and broken noggins were a common occurrence. A blot on the state and on the town was this locality in the town of East Greenwich. In September, 1900, the Kent Improvement Association investigated Scalloptown and found things indescribable. Conditions there among the shanty-dwellers horrified the most hardened investigators.

The town was cognizant of the fact that it had a problem. In 1899, William Streeter, who ran the *Pendulum*, printed the following explosive tirade, a typical example of the editorial style of the period:

#### SCALLOPTOWN SCANDAL

A trio of Human Hyenas Perpetrate Dastardly Deeds on the  
Shores of Greenwich Bay. During Early Hours of  
Sunday morning.

The town of East Greenwich as a general rule ranks morally as well as any of its sister towns in Rhode Island, though there is a growing tendence amongst a certain element of its population, toward a low and lawless nature, as will be found in all communities of mixed population when not held in check by an able, efficient and well-disciplined police service and patrol.

It is seldom, even among this lawless element, however that such low and vile practices occur as took place last Sunday morning in the notorious section of our village bearing the title

of Scalloptown. The surprising feature of the occurrence is the fact that all the foul turkey buzzards concerned and mixed up in the filthy affair were white, and the disclosure of their morality shown to be so far below that of the lowest and vilest animal or carrion ronyon that crawls. The details of the disgusting case are not only beyond the province of a family newspaper to portray, but are too filthy for public printing and almost beyond human belief.

One of the ronyons connected with the affair is a female about 45. She was found in a beastly drunken condition, was arrested and sent to the State Farm for two years. The owner of the squalid hovel where the heinous abomination occurred was dispatched to the State Work House, and given a chance to reform during a nine month's residence in that institution. The remaining ronyon of this trio of carrion buzzards who is well known about town and who comes from a respectable family, we regret to say is still at large, though he was diligently hunted for by the people along the shore and if he had been corraled it would have gone hard with him, as the thoroughly indignant citizens of the town who have law and order abiding proclivities, had prepared all the necessary ingredients and paraphernalia to a first class and lasting coat of tar and feathers.

It is hoped that some active measures will be taken by our citizens to purge and scavenge this notorious corner and plot upon our otherwise beautiful town of its unwholesome record and bring it under the protecting wing of the law and cause its denizens and frequenters to become decent and law abiding citizens or else migrate to other shores more suited to their heathenish tastes and proclivities."

Mr. Streeter's indignation evidently fell on deaf ears, because it was not until 1913 that the clean-up of Scalloptown really began. In November of that year Mrs. William Hodgman began a crusade to eliminate that section of the town. The Town Council finally took action and condemned many of the shacks as unfit for habitation. Mrs. Hodgman, with the help of other civic-minded residents, assisted in finding decent homes for these people — some of whom were children, innocent victims of the situation. It was also under the sponsorship of Mrs. Hodgman that the Neighborhood Cottage was

established. Staffed with competent directors it did a great deal to channel the talents and energies of parents and children in the neighborhood of Long Street, where the Cottage was located. It was not until 1926 that the final torch was applied to Scallop-town, reducing it to ashes. We still have shacks along the shore, but they are used mostly to house fishermen's gear.

In the past two hundred years the waterfront has run the gamut from slave trading to industrial fishing; from the Scallop-town scandal to a prime source of livelihood for the town; from a bustling port of entry to a yachtsman's dream of a safe harbor. Without the bay we would never have been; for which we should be everlastingly grateful to those who first settled here.



TIBBITTS TAVERN — CIRCA. 1790

## CHAPTER XVI

### *The Taverns in the Town*

Unlike the lyrics of the popular ballad “There is a Tavern in the Town”, East Greenwich had not one tavern but several. In 1699 the first license to sell liquor was issued to John Wood and Michael Spencer, allowing them “liberty to have a common ale house or tippling house”. According to record when there were only three hundred heads of families here in 1794, eleven liquor licenses were issued by the Town Council. Of these eleven, three were granted to women.

The tavern of early days was a combination social club, meeting hall, and inn. Friends and neighbors gathered there on various occasions and, as the years rolled by, the tavern assumed a dignity and place in the life of the community comparable to the English public house. The innholder, or innkeeper, was a man of stature in the village, being consulted on land deals, business ventures and impending marriages. His advice was respected and, more often than not, taken.

Any tangible trace of most of these old taverns has long since vanished. One stood at the corner of Moosehorn and Division Roads. Operated by members of the Tarbox family,



it was called Moosehorn Tavern. Jim Andrews had a tavern situated just beyond the home of Mrs. Ella Kettelle on Middle Road. No trace of these buildings remains. Down the road a little was the White Horse Tavern, on property now owned by Miss Grace E. Shippee. It was run by various members of the Weaver family. In 1733 the Town Council licensed William Weaver as an innholder thusly: "Resolved that William Weaver of this town have libertie to sell strong drink in the house wherein he now Dwells, he keeping good order upon each Training Day that Capt. — calls his company to Train at said Weaver House in this present year 1733 betweene the Hours of Eight of the Clock at night and noe longer" on penalty of fine. William Weaver's house was the meeting place of the Town Council at that time. In 1736 Joseph Weaver was granted a "license to keep a Common Ale House in the house where he lives". Joseph later moved to West Greenwich. Dutee Weaver was licensed in 1750, Harris Weaver in 1759 and Peleg Weaver in 1771. Thus the Weavers were tavern keepers in this town for over forty years.

On the northeast corner of Main and King Streets there stood for many years a good-sized tavern. It is impossible to fix an exact date for this old inn. But judging by its architecture in old pictures, it was built in the late eighteenth century. It was a large, long, white house with small-paned windows and wooden shutters. The door in the center of the building was graced by a handsome fan light. Four or five double steps ornamented by an iron railing led up to the front door. A side door, on the north end, led to the part of the building used for retail stores. On the corner was a post where the tavern sign hung. This sign carried the coat-of-arms of the State of Rhode Island and the name, "John Tibbitts' Tavern". A large ash tree stood in front of the inn and afforded welcome shade on hot summer days.

Inside the tavern, a broad hall ran through the center. At the left as you entered was the gentlemen's parlor and at the right the parlor for the ladies, from which a door led directly to the dining room. A long narrow extension of the

main building housed the tap-room. Back of the dining room was the ell-kitchen, where a tremendous fire-place dominated the large room. Iron pots hung on cranes, where hot chowder and hasty pudding bubbled away. In front of the fire-place, a long board held row upon row of jonny-cakes to be baked.

On the east side of the tavern stood a barn where horses and carriages were stabled while guests were at the tavern. John Tibbitts was the owner of the inn as early as 1820, but earlier proprietors are not known. Christopher Johnson was the next keeper of the tavern and this rhyme was chanted around East Greenwich:

“At Kit Johnson’s store, if we would need,  
There’s rum and gin and brandy.  
But as that is against our creed  
We’ll spend our change on candy.”

Some did and others did not!

In 1853 John Tibbitts’ nephew, and namesake, took charge of the tavern. He and his family lived there for ten years. It was about this time that a Masonic Hall was built onto the north end of the inn. The hall was on a level with the second story of the tavern, and was supported by large wooden posts. It could be reached by a covered stairway on the northwest side of the building. This hall was about where Koch’s Drug Store now stands.

In the Masonic Hall the townfolk attended dances. Always in evidence was Dr. Daniel Greene, whose first wife, Jane Hazard, was the best dancer in town. The music was furnished by an orchestra of violin, bass viol, and harp. Quadrille, reels, and lancers were the dances of the day. On Thanksgiving night, for a number of years, the ladies of the Baptist Church held their annual fair here. The whole town turned out for the occasion. The tavern kitchen was at the disposal of the ladies and many delicacies were made and served that evening. Ice cream was a rarity then, but youngsters were ecstatic over floating island, or a square of blanc-mange.

After John Tibbitts, 2nd, moved away, the tavern was kept by Lafayette Tillinghast. During the Civil War it was

operated by James Fones, who formerly had a small store on the corner of Long and Duke Streets, where he made cigars.

The store of the north side of the tavern was, in old John Tibbitts' day, kept by Robert Hall and was owned by Daniel Greene. It operated as a company store for the Union Mill, which Mr. Greene owned at the time. Later, Deacon (Cracker) Brown had a grocery store in that same place and, even later, John Tibbitts, 2nd, kept a harness shop there.

On the King Street side of the tavern there were two little shops. In the day of Old John, one of the shops was kept by an old fellow named James Russell Austin. He had a combination fish market and East Indian store, where you could buy salt mackerel, molasses, sugar and rum. The other shop was kept by James Madison, who was, of all things, both a barber and a cobbler! These stores were later occupied by Jimmie Rose, who had a fish market. In 1845, Ben Greene had a small school in one of the shops.

In the middle of a hot summer night in 1872, the barn of the Tibbitts Tavern was struck by lightning. The fire quickly spread to the tavern. The hard work of a bucket brigade failed to save the old landmark. On the site, in 1876, William Browning had the present brick building erected, where he and his sons ran a home furnishing business for many years.

Across the street from the Tibbitts Tavern was the John Brown Tavern. This inn was later moved to South Main Street, about across from where the Kent Theatre is now. Like the Tibbitts Tavern, it finally burned down.

As early as 1740 there were buildings on the site of what is now the Greenwich Hotel on Main Street. At that time, the property belonged to James Greene. Whether there was a tavern on the spot then cannot be ascertained. We do know that William Arnold was the proprietor in 1770 and that his father, John Arnold, is designated as an "innholder" in town records, so he could have preceded his son as proprietor of the tavern.

Colonel William Arnold was a citizen of rank in the community and it was at his inn, in 1774, that the Kentish Guards were organized. He and his family, consisting of his wife and nine children, made their home at the inn. After his death, in 1816, his sons, Perry and Stephen, managed the hostelry. From the time that Col. Arnold took over, the hotel had a license to sell liquor and this made it a popular spot for local meetings.

The inn was a large one for those times. Originally, a wide hall led right through the center of the building, with two great rooms on each side. A reception room was on the right of the entrance. Outside, over the door, hung a wooden sign representing a cluster of grapes, so the tavern was called both "The Bunch of Grapes" and the "Arnold Tavern". The entrance to the inn was shaded by three tall elms that graced the Main Street sidewalk.

About 1825, Daniel Updike, who had married Col. Arnold's daughter, Ardeliza, assumed the management of the inn. Daniel was one of the famous Updike family of North Kingstown, and it was at this time that the name of the tavern was changed to the "Updike Inn". Daniel Updike was a genial host, who met his guests at the door attired in old-fashioned dress. He wore knee-breeches, a fancy waistcoat, and white-topped boots. He kept his hair tied in a queue. He was a family man and refused to sell liquor in his establishment. In the three score years that the Updikes controlled the inn, not a drop of liquor was sold or served. In spite of this fact, the fame of the "Updike" was known throughout southern New England. Town events, such as Court Week, meetings of the General Assembly, or Quarterly Meeting of the Quakers, found the thirty-four rooms of the hotel filled to capacity.

The food was excellent. Whole pigs were cooked on spits before the open fire and delicious calf's head soup, for which the "Updike" was famous, bubbled away in great iron kettles. Indian pudding and baked beans with brown bread baked in a cabbage leaf were served at the inn.



At Daniel Updike's death in 1842, his son, Lodowick, took over, assisted by his two sisters, Alice and Abbie. None of these three ever married and they lived to a very old age — whether because of or in spite of, is hard to say! During the latter years of their life, the inn was managed for them by Nathaniel Carpenter.

In 1896 the old inn was torn down to make way for a new modern hostelry. In 1928, under the operation of Kenneth Allen, the name of the hotel was changed to Greenwich Inn. To many it is still "The Updike", recalling the family who made, and maintained for so many years, its fine reputation. In 1951 Michael Romano purchased the inn and, at present, it is known as the Greenwich Hotel. Many celebrated personages have tarried here when traveling via the old Post Road. Traveling road shows of the mid 1800's made the inn their headquarters and registered some very startling signatures that are still in existence.

During Prohibition the Updike became notorious as a gambling house. The Prohibition laws bothered the proprietors not a whit. Numerous tales are told of large sums of money changing hands over the gaming tables at all-night gambling sessions. As the years go by, the sums get larger!

In the 1890's another tavern was operated by Joseph S. Byrne. It was named "The Old Homestead" and it is still in existence today. Located on the south side of London Street it was a great gathering place for mill hands at the turn of the century. At Mr. Byrnes' death, the inn was taken over by his nephew, John McKenna. It is now owned and operated by Antonio Denice and Peter Dente.

These were a few of the taverns in the town, the Whitehorse, Moosehorn, Jim Andrews', John Tibbitts', the Updike and the Old Homestead. There were many others, without doubt, but these mentioned are the ones which have left a lasting impression on the town because around them revolved the social and political life of the community.



OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH — 1867

## CHAPTER XVII

### *Races and Nationalities*

On the very heels of the settlers of the town, came the first of the Negro race. The earliest record available shows that members of this race were here in 1698. This is remarkable when we consider that, according to record, the first slave ship to touch the shores of Rhode Island was the brig "Sea-flower". It put into Newport in 1696 to sell four Negroes from a cargo of forty-seven. The will of Giles Pearce, dated 1698, is on record at the East Greenwich Town Hall. In it, Pearce lists as part of his possessions "one Negro girl, Frances". Thomas Langford, in his will of 1709, mentions owning a Negro man, as do Thomas Fry and Benjamin Barton. There is no doubt that in these early years some of the so-called Negroes were, in fact, Indian or part Indian.

The selling of Indians as slaves was an accepted thing after King Philip's War. Even Roger Williams, advocate of freedom as he was, sanctioned the indenturing and selling of Indian captives. These Indians, herded into a stockade at Cocumscussoc, were distributed and sold to colonists. This action was arranged and performed by a committee of five headed by Roger Williams.

Numerous vessels, captained by men of East Greenwich, often made port here in the early days and sometimes carried rum, molasses, or slaves. Slaves very probably were delivered to owners in town, although there is no record of any such transactions.

In 1730 the total population of Rhode Island was 17,935. Of this number, 1,648 were Negroes and 935 were Indians. Sixty years later, the first official United States census recorded a total population of 68,825. Of this number, 948 were slaves. Evidently no distinction then was made between Negroes and Indians. The 1790 census showed just thirteen slaves in East Greenwich. It is apparent that in the early part of the nineteenth century most of the Negroes in town had been made freemen. It was common practice to draw up a will and stipulate therein that a Negro was to be "made free so as to be at his own disposing at 30 years of age". These freed Negroes formed the nucleus of the Negro population here. The surnames of the colored people are the names of old families in this and nearby areas. This was the custom, not only here but throughout the country. So we have had among our Negro residents the familiar names of Fry, Powell, Hill and Robinson. There are very few Negro families now living in East Greenwich.

There was one Negro, a rather remarkable character, called Aunt Judy by all who knew her. Her name was probably Robinson although this has not been proved. She lived to be over one hundred years of age. Born near Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1804, she was purchased, with her mother, by a man named Pilkington and taken to Stokes County, North Carolina. When Judy was six years old, her mother was sold to a slave trader and the child never heard of her again. When

Judy grew up, she was married to a slave belonging to a neighboring plantation owner. She had five children, of which only one, a boy, lived. During the Civil War, Aunt Judy ran away with her husband and child and went to Washington, D. C. When they came to this vicinity, Aunt Judy and her husband were employed as free Negroes by Amasa Sprague at his home in Cowesett. Aunt Judy's son worked his way through the East Greenwich Academy. When her husband died in 1892, the house they had purchased on the shore of Greenwich Bay had to be sold to satisfy the mortgage holder. But the purchaser of the house, in kindness, let Aunt Judy use two rooms and she made her home there until her death. She was a fervent Christian and always said that "the grace of God" came to her when she was young and worked in the fields.

Possibly the best known Negro in East Greenwich was Alfred Fry, familiarly known as "Judge" Fry. He lived on Rope Walk Hill and was a man of considerable ability. He was a member of the local police force for twenty years. He served in the Civil War as a member of the Rhode Island Regiment and, later, the Second Massachusetts. He kept peace between white man and black and was often called in, unofficially, by families employing Negroes, to iron out difficulties. He must have been a veritable Solomon, as local records bear out his success as a mediator. He died in 1900, a good policeman and a memorable character.

And so the Negro, like other nationalities and races, came to East Greenwich for various reasons. Sometimes (unlike other races) they may have come against their will, but we like to think that life here was pleasant for most of them. At times there must have been a goodly number of free Negroes in town; enough to have their own church and societies. Names such as Powell, Fry, Profitt, Boyd and Harris, bring thoughts of good citizens and fine families.

#### THE IRISH IN EAST GREENWICH

In the list of original grantees of the town, there appears the name of one Charles Macarty, who without doubt, leads



the parade of Irishmen to this vicinity. The will of this man, dated 1682, is on file at the Town Hall. It was the first will to be recorded here. Charles Macarty was originally from Kinsale in County Cork, Ireland. He came here via the island of St. Kitts, B.W.I., and Newport, Rhode Island. In a monograph, called "Charles McCarthy, Rhode Island Pioneer, 1677", written by Thomas Hamilton Murray in 1901, the author has many interesting theories about our Charles McCarthy and states: "That he was a man of sturdy character cannot be questioned. That he was worthy to rank as a founder of a town must also be admitted. He plainly possessed traits and qualities entitling him to a place in the front ranks of Rhode Island settlers".

As the years rolled along, Irish names appeared in town records Andrew Boyd of Balleywallen, Coleraine, Ireland, was here in 1731; Constant Maguire of County Fermanagh in 1750; and Patrick Carven in 1786. But it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that there was an actual colony of Irish in East Greenwich. Irish immigration to the United States during the 1840's rose to 160,000. Five-sixths of these immigrants settled on the eastern seaboard. It was inevitable that some of them would find their way here.

Among the earliest arrivals was John Keelin, who made his home on Castle Street and later served as local postmaster. From Counties Monaghan, Clare, Roscommon, Leitrim, and Kerry came Hugh Finnegan, John Hughes, John Burns, Stephen Cullen, Martin Fitzpatrick, John Mahoney, James Flanagan, Peter McKone, Michael Galvin, and many others who sought to establish homes in Greenwich. Some of these men had trades, like Peter McKone, whose blacksmith shop was on Main Street; and Malachi Kelly, the stone mason, who built the fine stone walls on Ives Road. Young single women came from Ireland to "work out" among the wealthy families, like the Spragues, Russells, Washburns, Rhodes and Goddards. Young Irishmen, too, served as gardeners, coachmen and housemen, while others were employed in local mills, like the Shore Mill and the Bleachery.

With the arrival of a Catholic priest in 1850, these people quickly made plans for a church edifice and were instrumental in the building of the present church and rectory. Sons and daughters of these early Irishmen remember that their fathers and brothers, after working hard at their regular jobs all day, gathered at the church site in the evening to help in the construction.

The Irish had an advantage over other immigrant groups in that they spoke English and were used to English ways—although the English were their ancient enemies. Like other nationalities they were ambitious for their children and believed in higher education. East Greenwich men and women of Irish descent have made their mark in various professions. Many have served the town in official positions, such as Thomas J. Freeman, Town Councilman for many years, and J. William Corr, who served as a member of the School Committee for several terms. Names of some of the early Irish group have died out. But most of them, like Galvin, McKone, Burns, Brennan, and Finnegan, are as familiar now as they were one hundred years ago.

These people from Ireland brought little with them in the line of worldly goods, but were rich in lore, song, and culture of their country. Their love of the land, of home, family, and church, automatically made them good citizens and they, too, added their bit to the making of the town.

### THE JEWS IN EAST GREENWICH

The Rev. Frederic Denison, a reputable historian, wrote an article for the Narragansett Historical Register, in 1886, called "The Israelites in Rhode Island". The article was concerned primarily with the Portuguese-Jews who came to Newport in the early part of the eighteenth century. In the article he makes the following statement: "He (Aaron Lopez) built in East Greenwich a two-storied gambrel-roofed brick house, with a store in one corner below. The edifice still stands (1882) on the corner of Main and Long Streets. This was probably one of his branch trading houses".

In spite of much checking and research, it has been impossible to prove that Aaron Lopez, merchant prince, was ever the owner of the Brick House where Dr. Charles Phillips now has his office. Town records do not have the name of Lopez anywhere. But it is possible that, because he was a Jew, the house could not be registered or built in his name. At any rate, it is improbable that he ever really lived here, but the house was certainly a trading post. Aaron Lopez came to America about 1746, and married the daughter of Jacob Rivera of Newport. Aaron owned thirty square-rigged vessels and engaged in European and West Indian trade. At the time of the Revolutionary War, his ships were seized by the British and his business ruined.

Actually, the first Jewish family known to have settled in East Greenwich was that of Isaac Solomon and his wife. Rosa. Born in Poland, the Solomons first came to New York and thence to Hope Valley in 1890. At Hope Valley, Mr. Solomon had a horse and wagon in which he traveled through that section of Rhode Island, selling wearing apparel for men. In June, 1894, the Solomons came to Greenwich and opened a clothing store on Main Street, where Solomons' is today. Benjamin Solomon took over the business at his father's death and built the store into the finest haberdashery in this area. Ben was a very popular fellow in town, first as an outstanding athlete at the Academy and then as a successful young business man and civic leader. He died in 1954. His son, Leonard, now runs the business started so long ago in a wagon in Hope Valley.

In 1907 Herman Silverman, a young Jewish business man from Troy, New York, came here and started a shoe store in the other half of the Solomon Store. Soon after, Herman married Jennie Solomon. His store expanded to include women's and children's apparel and he moved to his present location on Main Street. In 1958 the shoe store was transferred to a location just south on the Main Street and Howard Silverman was made manager. Herman continued to operate his business at the corner of Main and Armory Streets. From

the time he came to Greenwich Herman Silverman served on numerous committees and has given impetus to many projects and drives for the good of the community.

Other Jewish families came here early in the nineteenth century. Samuel Cohen came about 1900 and had a shoe store here. Jacob Kaufman came about 1910 and operated a second-hand store and junk yard on Main Street near Union Street. The Jacobson family also came to Greenwich about 1908.

In 1908 Joseph Abrams came to town and started a cobbler shop on Main Street. He had previously lived in Boston, Massachusetts and in Wickford. Mr. Abrams apparently liked East Greenwich and influenced other members of his family to settle here. In 1912 Herman Fogel and his wife, who was Fanny Abrams, opened a grocery store at the south end of town. In 1909 John L. Halsband, whose wife was Frieda Abrams, started a variety store. In 1911 the family of Israel Waterman, whose wife was Annie Abrams, cousin to Joseph, came to Greenwich. Later, three brothers of Joseph Abrams—Julius, Morris and Myer—also came with their families. The Abrams brothers, in 1922, founded the Main St. Garage. They have been reputable Buick dealers for many years.

In looking over these names we realize that this Jewish colony was actually only three families: the Solomons, Silvermans and the Abrams. They are the basis for all the other families of their race in town.

For the last three generations they have contributed much to the cultural and civic development, as well as the business growth, of East Greenwich.

#### SWEDES IN EAST GREENWICH

In the latter half of the nineteenth century there was an influx of Swedish emigrants to the United States. Disastrous crop failures in Sweden, combined with the growth of commercial agriculture, indicated that very soon there would be no room remaining for the free peasant farmer. Thus the



great exodus from Sweden began. In the 1870's the emigrants from that country to the United States averaged 15,000 a year. In the eighties the average number rose to 37,000 a year.

Some of these people found their way to New England, and thence to East Greenwich. In 1872 Carl F. Anderson came here. Very soon after, he and his wife, Sophie, established a sort of clearing house in their home for the Swedes arriving almost daily. The Andersons lived in the little house standing just behind the present day Boy Scout Hall on Spring Street. An efficient manager, Mrs. Anderson sheltered these men and women and helped to place them in service to wealthy families in this vicinity. It is said that one night, about eleven o'clock, the local station agent delivered eleven unexpected immigrants to Mrs. Anderson's doorstep. She rose to the occasion, giving them food and shelter!

Close on the heels of the Anderson family came John Bergstrom, Levi Johnson, and Carl Bergstrom. The next two decades brought the Carlsons, Shogrens, Lindbergs, Garbergs, Munsons, Lawsons, Almquists, and many others whose names are familiar to residents of East Greenwich. These people acted as sponsors for their fellow countrymen. They wrote letters to the old country, urging their friends and relatives to come here to make their homes and, when they had gotten on their own feet, they put up the money to pay the passage for others.

The majority of these people came from a province called Vastergotland, located on the southwest coast of Sweden on the Skagerrak, an arm of the North Sea. Sometime farmers or perhaps textile workers in the mills of Goteborg, they evidently felt a kinship between their coastal village and that of East Greenwich. So, here they settled to raise their families and start life anew. The going was often very difficult, but they helped each other in time of need and felt strongly the ties of nationality.

Most of these Swedish emigrants were low on material resources but rich in courage, health, and love of freedom. They settled in numbers in the area bounded by Church,

West, Division, and Peirce Streets. So closely did they settle in this vicinity that the townspeople jokingly called this part of town "Swedie Hill".

There is no need to emphasize the fine and responsible citizens that these Swedish people became. Their children and grandchildren bear witness to this fact. They have integrated into the life of the town completely. Three men of Swedish descent, Oscar Bergstrom, Charles Algren, and Howard Benson, have represented the town in the State legislature. Many have held key positions in local government. They have become prosperous merchants, farmers and business men.

#### THE ITALIANS IN EAST GREENWICH

Another large group of Europeans to come to Greenwich as immigrants were the Italians. Coming last as a group, they made a place for themselves, integrating perhaps more slowly than other groups because of language and temperamental differences.

As far as can be ascertained, the first family man to arrive here was Michael Catanio, who came in 1892. He and his wife, Maria Catherine, lived with their young family in a small cottage on Cedar Avenue. He worked as a wood-chopper.

Other families came soon after that and, through the next decade, there was a steady influx of Italians to the town. The names of Del Vicario, Perretta, Derensis, Mastracchio, D'Attore, and Denice became as familiar as they are today. Some of these people did not come here directly from Italy. Many left their homeland to go to Marseilles and other French cities to work in cotton mills, thereby earning enough money to continue their journey to this country. Some went first to Natick, where they worked at the B. B. and R. Knight Mills before coming to work at the Bleachery.

It is interesting to note that, with few exceptions, these Italians came from villages within a radius of one hundred

miles of each other. The Province of Campobasso was the home of the Zenga, Izzi, Catanio, and Ucci families. From the Province of Caserta came the majority of families: Del Vicario, Benedetti, Perretta, Dente, Mastracchio, Petteruti, Calouri, Maddalena, Raimando, Romano, Pucino, and Miniero. The Eugenio and Denice families came from the Province of Potenza, and the Palermos from the island of Ischia. Looking at a map of Italy, you will find that these provinces are all located near the ankle of the famous boot and within the hundred mile radius. Each of these Italian provinces is made up of small villages with rural population engaged, primarily, in farming and fruit growing.

The Italians, like their immigrant predecessors, the Swedes, had a language barrier to overcome. Their way of life differed even more from the American way and, for a while, they formed sort of a colony in the area of Duke, Queen, King, and Marlborough Streets. They kept to themselves, speaking their own language and preserving Old World customs. Very soon, however, they came to feel the spirit of this country and entered vigorously into the life of the town. Having the common heritage of the Catholic religion with the Irish, who had settled earlier, they mingled more freely with them. The church of Our Lady of Mercy became their church, as well as that of the Irish people who had built it. They worked hard to establish homes and businesses, educating their children to take their place in the community.

Contributing greatly to the town of East Greenwich, the descendants of the Italian immigrants have become professional men, merchants, teachers, and business men and women. The town has recognized their achievements and elected them to positions in public life. Michael Romano has served as representative in the General Assembly and is now a member of the Town Council. Stephen D'Attore, whose father came here in 1905, was also our representative in the Legislature when he died in 1959.

The love of music, which has ever been a part of the Italian heritage and culture, evidenced itself here when Salva-

tore Baldino, in 1918, organized the East Greenwich Columbus Band, comprised of boys from seven to eighteen years of age. This band, and its successors, under the able direction of Mr. Baldino, gave numerous band concerts on the Academy campus over a period of years. A composer of considerable ability, this director will long be remembered in town for the pleasure he offered to all lovers of music.

Like all other nationalities, the Italians had many of their number on the roll of honor during the last three wars. John Felici and Richard Cevoli both died in the service of their country.

In sixty-five years the immigrant Italians have become more than an ethnical group in town. They have imbued this place with color, culture, and industry of the Old World. Unobtrusively but firmly, with hard work and, too often, heartbreak because of racial prejudice against them, they have entrenched themselves as permanent residents and responsible citizens of this town.

So, since 1677 when the first immigrants, the English settlers, founded the town, there have actually been only four large groups of immigrants here, namely, Irish, Swedish, Jewish, and Italian. A small melting pot in itself, East Greenwich has been fortunate in the calibre of its immigrants. They have been the home-loving, community-minded type, who give to a town as much as they take from it. This is not to say that there has been no prejudice in our town. Both heads and hearts have been broken because of discrimination, but in the last hundred years we have come a long way on the road to understanding and living with our neighbors.





VARNUM ARMORY — 1914

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *East Greenwich in Five Wars*

In 1861, East Greenwich was startled at the prospect of facing another war. The firing at Fort Sumter found echo here, and again the townsfolk gathered at the Court House to decide how they could do their part. On May 4, 1861, the eighty-fifth anniversary of Rhode Island's Declaration of Independence, a special town meeting was called. A payment was voted to "The Kentish Guards and such other military companies as may aid in the defense of the Federal Government". On May 15, a resolution presented by Dr. James H. Eldredge, expressed regret at having to take up arms against their countrymen, but vowed to uphold the Federal government. Three men were appointed as a committee for enlistments: Albert J. Congdon, William E. Peck and Richard G. Howland. Three others, John T. Knowles, Samuel W. Pierce and Russell Vaughn, comprised a committee for disbursement. They also voted to: 1) pay one dollar to each man for every six hours of drill in a military company, not to exceed twelve hours a week; 2) to pay any needy family of a man in the

service money, not to exceed ten dollars a month; finally, that when a local company left for duty their commanding officer was to be given two hundred and fifty dollars to be distributed to non-commissioned officers.

These resolutions, made and voted upon in the heat of patriotic fervor, and with the thought in mind of a short war and a decisive victory, proved impractical. The next year, when the war began to look like a long, involved affair, the resolutions were repealed. It became increasingly difficult to raise the number of men required by the state. Unlike the Revolutionary War, this one seemed far away from East Greenwich. Bounties were raised from one hundred and fifty to four hundred and fifty dollars. Help for the families of soldiers fell on the shoulders of the town fathers and they came to the rescue, even though the state had forbidden the towns to offer bounties. Samuel S. Whiting and George W. Austin died in the service, and it was quickly voted that their bounties be paid to their families.

Over one hundred and fifty men from this area were in the Civil War, on the side of the Union. Quite a difference from the War of 1812, for which there was little feeling, and only one man, George A. Briggs, served from East Greenwich.

Among those who gave their lives in the Civil War from East Greenwich were: James B. Spencer, who died at Newport News, Virginia; Richard Spencer, who died at a Conscription Camp at New Haven; William E. Peck, who served as Judge Advocate and captain of the Third Regiment, R. I. Cavalry, died at Napoleonville, Louisiana; Benjamin Martindale, killed on picket duty near New Berne, North Carolina; George W. Austin, Samuel Myers, Samuel Whiting and Hiram Whitman, all killed in the action at Fredericksburg in 1862. Two sons of Stukely and Sarah Wickes, Stephen and Franklin, both in their early twenties, died in the infamous prison at Andersonville, Georgia. They were both members of Company A, R. I. Heavy Artillery. Other men returned disabled in various ways.

In 1898, the Quonset Camp for Rhode Island Volunteers for the Spanish-American War, was opened. A relatively small number of men from this area participated in this campaign. Among those who are listed as veterans are: Harris Ralph, Dr. F. G. Taggart, Olaf Jacobson, Alfred Johnson, Patrick Hanbury Matthew Whelan, Albert Thompson, Joseph Fields, Edward Perkins, Thomas Regan, Lewis Salisbury, Frank Clarke and Louis Fry. Also, Owen Hanbury, Stephen Cooke, Louis Fiske, Walter Harrington, Peter Henchey, Harrie King, John Nichols, Walter Nichols and Irving King.

World War I, the "war to end wars", took its toll here, as in other communities throughout the nation. One hundred and forty-seven men from this area took part in the war, many of them serving overseas in France. Five boys gave their lives, George Cleveland, Richard Grant, Victor Lorenson, Cyril Mosher and Fred Magoon. Jess Whaley was blinded by an exploding grenade.

In World War II, there were three hundred and fifty-four young men and women from this area in the various services. The following never returned: Albert Kenyon, David Westcott, Richard Tarbox, Arthur Weindel, Jonathan Harwood, Robert E. Annin, 3rd, John Felici, John G. Byrnes and Donald Davis. Richard Cevoli, a local boy and Navy flier, lost his life in a plane crash soon after the war.

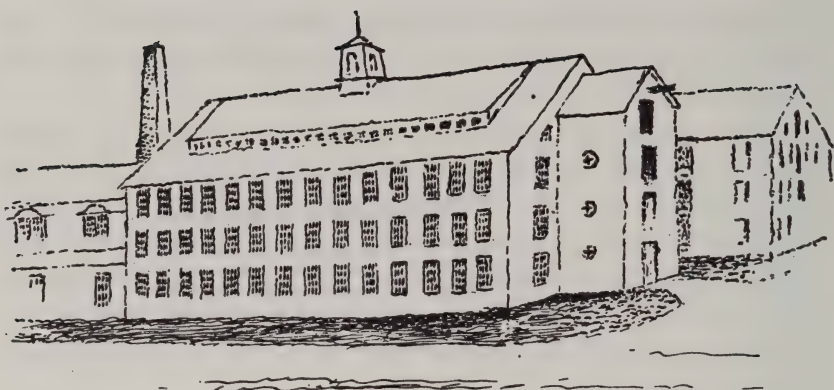
The war boomed the Naval Air Station and Construction Battalion Base at Quonset and Davisville and the town of East Greenwich was so overcrowded by 1942, with the influx of navy personnel and their families, that apartments were at a premium. Rationing of domestic oil, gasoline, sugar, shoes and other items, brought the war home to everyone. Almost every family in Greenwich had at least one member in the service and felt keenly the pressure of war.

The United Service Organization established a recreation center at the corner of Main and Greene Streets in 1942. Local girls, under supervision, served as hostesses to service men stationed near here. A director was appointed and many ac-

tivities were organized for the service men. The U. S. O. was officially closed in 1946, when it was no longer needed, and the building was sold for a theatre.

The joy at the declaration of peace in 1945 was short-lived as the Korean War broke out in 1950. Once again the young men of the town were called to serve their country. Wars and the echoes of wars have plagued mankind for centuries. East Greenwich has shared in each one involving the United States. The townspeople pray, as their forefathers did in 1783, when Jacob Campbell read them the Treaty of Peace, that peace will reign for many years to come.





THE SHORE MILL — 1859

## CHAPTER XIX

### *Manufacturing Through the Years*

When the first settlers came to East Greenwich from Newport, Portsmouth, and Jamestown, they carried with them their few possessions. These had to suffice in their life here, for there were no shops or supply houses in those days. Neighbor helped neighbor, and they devised for themselves the things needed for existence. The value of any implement ranked high, as is evidenced by the wills of these pioneers. They carefully apportioned pewter, silverware, lengths of cloth, pots, tools, and looms to their descendants. These latter articles were more precious than gold, for with them could be provided the shelter, the food, and the clothing necessary to survive.

Not until the middle of the eighteenth century were manufacturing and production of any appreciable size evident in East Greenwich. Up to that time, a barter system was used, whereby a craftsman would exchange his service for that of another. Carpenters were the busiest of men. Using primitive tools and wooden pegs instead of nails, they built small, sturdy homes which withstood the battering of New England win-

ters. Some of these houses are still standing, serving as lasting memorials to the workmanship and ingenuity of the Yankee carpenter.

Arranged as chronologically as possible, the following manufacturers played an important part in the industrial and economic growth of East Greenwich:

### THE UPTON KILN

In 1771 two brothers, Isaac and Samuel Upton, came to East Greenwich from Berkley, Massachusetts. They were nephews of Joseph and Paul Osborn, well-known Quaker potters of Danvers, Massachusetts. The Uptons, who were also Quakers, built a workshop and kiln on the northeast corner of King and Marlborough Streets. They used a red clay which they found at Gould's Mound in Quidnessett. From it they fashioned earthenware pottery. They made pots, bowls, jugs, plates, cups and saucers. The pottery was unglazed and crude, but local residents were glad to get it, as the importation of all goods was made uncertain by the threat of war.

In 1783 Isaac sold his share in the building and business to Samuel and went back to live in Berkley. Samuel married Phebe Peirce, sister of Preserved, and they lived here for some years. In later life, Samuel became a sea captain. He finally ended his days in South Adams, Massachusetts.

It is interesting to note that Preserved Peirce, brother-in-law of Samuel Upton, owned a sloop named Rosemary and travelled up and down the coast of Rhode Island and Massachusetts selling wooden ware, pottery, hats, etc.

Thus it was that the Upton brothers established the first real manufacturing venture in the confines of the town of East Greenwich.

### BLACKSMITHS AND SILVERSMITHS OF THE TOWN

The blacksmith, at his forge, was the inventive genius of early times. He hammered out tools, pots, and utensils of all kinds to make the lot of the early settler more livable. He

was much more than a mere smith, ever contriving and experimenting with iron and brass to achieve a useful end.

The forge, run by the Greene family of Potowomut, was an early industry in this area, having its beginning in 1725. The Greens also had a saw mill and a grist mill in the same vicinity. Although Samuel Bennett had a fulling mill here as early as 1685, it was probably very small, employing no hands. The forge at Green's River produced anchors, ranging from three or four feet to monstrous sizes, like the one preserved at the entrance to the Forge. The Greens employed all of their own numerous family, and a few helpers, in their young industry.

Forging and iron work could not be mentioned in connection with East Greenwich without the name of Cromwell Salisbury coming to mind. Mr. Salisbury was a local blacksmith. He had a forge at the corner of King and Exchange Streets, in the V-shaped area originally intended, by the town fathers, for a market place. Cromwell was born here in 1792, the son of Jonathan Salisbury. Like his father, he was a tremendous man, weighing close to four hundred pounds. He operated the smithy about 1828 and manufactured his own metal from raw material. He wielded a mighty hammer and, for the people of East Greenwich, fashioned their needed utensils. Of brass and iron he made andirons, kettles, shovels and other tools, creating his own patterns as he went along. Much more than a shoer of horses, this man was a craftsman of considerable ability and resourcefulness.

It is not hard to imagine him at his blazing forge, with curious little boys standing around admiring his prowess. Whether any of Cromwell Salisbury's handwork still exists is very doubtful, but perhaps in some attic of an old East Greenwich home there may be a hidden treasure in some samples of his craft.

There were many other able blacksmiths here through the years. Roland Crandall had a good-sized smithy on Main Street, where the Main Street Garage is today. He lived in the Wentworth house on Peirce Street. A man named Potter suc-

ceeded him at his trade. Later the shop was owned and operated by Clarke Wells, who is still living in this vicinity — the last of the mighty blacksmiths. At a later period some of us recall Bennett's forge on Friendship Street and the smithy of Peter McKone on Main Street, near where the Arnold Garage is now. The youngsters of today who have never stood agog to watch a brawny man hammer iron, while the fire roars and the sparks fly, have missed a thrill. The roar of the fire was deafening and the clank of iron on iron rang in your ears long after your reluctant departure.

A more delicate form of craftsmanship was that of the silversmith. In East Greenwich, Nathan Miller and his son, James, were silversmiths of considerable ability. Their shop was just behind their home on the corner of Division and Peirce Streets. Nathan manufactured bayonets for the Continental Army and was exempt from military service because his product was so vital. His son, James, who served in the Revolutionary War, was a much respected citizen of the town and served as Town Clerk from 1808 to 1835.

### THE ROPE WALK

In Revolutionary times, the Rope Walk, operated by Joseph Greene and sons, was located on Castle Street, overlooking the bay. Here they made cordage and cables for sailing vessels. The shed which housed this business was at the elbow of Castle Street and has been torn down. With the thriving shipping business in town, the environs of Rope Walk Hill were as busy as a bee hive. The air was full of the spicy odor of hemp and of the tar in which the ropes were dipped to preserve them from the salt water. As people walked along Castle Street, they could see old Joseph Greene walking slowly backwards with a large band of hemp around his waist, spinning cleverly with his fingers, while one of his sons slowly turned the crank of the large wheel which operated the spindle. Besides his two sons, Joseph and Barnabas, Joseph employed several workers from town.

Rope Walk Hill was, in its day, quite a center of activity. Here the crews of incoming fishing vessels placed their fish to



dry on wattle frames. Here, too, was set up a gibbet where, although there is no record of a hanging, a man named Joseph Pepper was forced to remain seated on the cross bar with a rope around his neck for one hour. He was being punished for bigamy and suffered the jeers and missiles of the townsfolk as they passed by. Rope Walk Hill was, therefore, also called Gallows Hill and Hangman's Hill.

Old Joseph Greene, of Rope Walk fame, was a veteran of the Revolutionary War and fifth generation in descent from John Greene, patriarch of all the Rhode Island Greenes. He was born in Greenwich in 1745 and was cousin to General Nathanael Greene. He married Patience Sheffield in 1770 and they had one daughter and two sons. He was a charter member of the Kentish Guards and served as sergeant in the R. I. Militia from 1776 to 1777. Joseph lived to be eighty-one years old and was buried in the Old Baptist Burying Ground on Wine Street. The home of Joseph Greene and his family stood at the northwest corner of Main and Peirce Streets and was called "Stirling Castle". The house was torn down in 1956.

#### THE SALTPETER WORKS

In 1775 there was a decided shortage of nitre, as it had heretofore been imported from Europe. Because it was an essential ingredient of gunpowder, the government was very anxious to acquire any saltpeter available. Richard Mathewson, of this town, a man who possessed considerable business acumen, built a saltpeter works on Division Street just east of the Windmill Cottage.

From earth gathered from cellars and foundations of old houses around East Greenwich, Mr. Mathewson had the basis for his product. He carried this earth to the Saltpeter Works, where it was placed in a cask and water was poured over it. The resultant lye was strained in a leach of ashes from which the strength had been taken and it was then boiled until it reached the desired consistency. After it was cooled, the saltpeter formed quickly. From a bushel of earth there was a yield of about three quarters of a pound of saltpeter.

The entire process required the services of several men, so that the Saltpeter Works can take its place as an early manufacturing venture in this town.

### CALICO PRINTING

In his "History of East Greenwich" Dr. Daniel Greene states unequivocally that the calico printing establishment in this town was the first on the North American continent; a statement this writer has been unable to verify, but there was, without doubt, a calico printing plant here at a very early date. In 1790 a man named Herman Van Duesen, a German printer, (not a man named Dawson, as Dr. Greene states) came to town and opened a printing plant. It was located at the north end of the town, just over the boundary of Warwick. There is an Esso gas station on the site today. Linen cloth, woven and bleached by women of the village, was printed at the factory.

Mr. Van Duesen cut his design on wood blocks and printed the cloth in color from the blocks. Such wood blocks may still be seen at the Varnum House Museum and at the Rhode Island Historical Society. The result of this process produced a rare and costly article, in those early times. There was little or no calico to be bought at the stores, so each family wove its own cloth and carried it to the printing establishment where they could select their own patterns and colors.

It was about this time, 1788, that a weaver, James MacKerries of Scotland, came from Providence to East Greenwich where he made corduroy. John Fullem, an Irish stocking weaver was here, too, but where their shops were located is not known.

### TANNERIES

The next industry to thrive here was that of tanning hides. The earliest tannery was operated by Nathan Greene at the rear of the Eldredge House, on the corner of Division and Peirce Streets. Mr. Greene began to tan hides here in 1780. Shortly after that time, Caleb Greene owned and

operated a tannery on the site of the old Drysalters. Martin Miller operated a tannery on Queen Street, between Marlborough and Duke Streets, and Robinson Pearce had a tannery on Main Street at the north end of town.

Tanning, in those days, was a long hard process, often taking months to complete. Special bark had to be brought in from Maine. This bark was ground by hand and grindstone. Later, Nathan Greene acquired a bark mill to simplify matters a bit. The bark mill was operated very much like a coffee mill, grinding the bark finer than was ever possible by hand.

Large wooden tanning vats were sunk in the ground until level with the surface. They were filled, in layers, with bark and hides, like a monstrous club sandwich, and left to soak in the tannic acid. The tanner used a long wooden pole with a hook on the end to turn the hides from time to time, so that the acid would penetrate each hide equally. The whole process of cleaning, curing, drying and brushing, as well as the actual tanning, took the greater part of one year to complete.

It is not to be wondered at that the tanner was not the most popular of neighbors. The aroma from his place of manufacture was often overpowering, but the leather was needed and for many years this was the only process known.

#### CARD MANUFACTURE

We have already learned of the ingenuity of Richard Mathewson. He had, in 1775, started the Saltpeter Works on Division Street. In 1790 he began a new venture and had, as his partner, Earl Mowry. They began to manufacture wire carders. Their place of manufacture, using horsepower, was on the northwest corner of Main and Church Streets. As far as can be ascertained, it was the first factory of its kind in the country.

Earl Mowry had the inventive and mechanical skill, while Mr. Mathewson supplied the business sense. Mr. Mowry contrived machinery for puncturing holes in leather and for cut-

ting and shaping the teeth for the cards. The wire for the teeth varied in size and thickness, depending upon what kind of wool was to be processed. These teeth had to be hand-inserted into holes in the leather. Women and children of the town were employed in this work, which was called "setting cards". Some women, when they went calling of an afternoon, took cards and a pan of wire teeth along and worked as they chatted. Other women and girls worked at the factory, checking the teeth, pulling out crooked ones and inserting perfect ones.

Later, Mathewson and Mowry ceased to make these hand cards. Instead, they provided cards for carding and spinning machines used in the cotton mills in this area.

#### HAT MANUFACTURING

Before 1800 there were three hat manufacturers in East Greenwich. John Casey had the largest business. He employed a number of workers in his plant at the north end of Main Street. Daniel Davis had a smaller establishment in the house just south of the Town Hall.

The third hat maker in town was Ezra Simmons. His factory was on the corner of Main and Queen Streets. Ezra had three sons: Chandler, Caleb, and Henry. Chandler was a talented painter with a flair for caricature. If he had been encouraged, he might have become a famous native son. But the hat business was of prime importance to the Simmons family, so Chandler received no encouragement and made little or nothing of his gift. The other boys, Caleb and Henry, were steady, industrious, and very willing to help in the family venture. The hats were made here in Greenwich and the old man, with his two sons, would trudge among the villages within a radius of ten miles laden with large bundles of hats strapped to their shoulders.

The making of hats was a real challenge to Ezra Simmons. He was known to walk down the street and, seeing a man wearing a hat-shape unfamiliar to him, without a "by-your-



leave" he would take the hat from the man's head, examine it carefully and then replace it!

Hats were manufactured in those days, by placing a wooden block, shaped like the crown of a hat, in a strategic position on a table. The block was thoroughly soaked with water and placed amid wool fibers on the table. The workman held a long bow, which was suspended from the ceiling. Snapping the string sharply, he sent the wool fibers in a swirl against the wet block. This operation was continued until the wool was of sufficient thickness for a hat. The block, now covered with wool, was set in a pot of boiling water until the fibers had become felted and could be removed in one piece from the block. In the center of the workroom was a large copper kettle set in brick, with a furnace beneath to heat the water. A workman, covering his hands with heavy leather, would roll and squeeze the hats in the boiling water until they were firmly felted. The felt was shaped on blocks into various sizes of hats, which were then bound, trimmed, and readied for market.

All three men, John Casey, Daniel Davis, and Ezra Simons, found this business of hat-making very lucrative.

#### THE TILLINGHAST FACTORY AT FRENCHTOWN

The first cotton mill was established here between 1812 and 1814. Located about three miles west of the village of East Greenwich, it was situated, geographically, in the very center of the town. The mill is now but a ruin and all that remains are a few stones of the foundation.

The Tillinghast family built the mill and ran it for several decades. Historians differ on which member of the family actually established the mill. Some say it was Dr. Thomas. Others are sure it was the Honorable Thomas Tillinghast. Robert W. Wheeler, a newspaperman who usually checked his sources carefully, maintained in a Providence Journal-Bulletin article that it was Pardon Tillinghast who built the mill. So take your choice. Records fail to prove the point.

The official name of the mill was the Mount Hope Manufactory, but it was locally known as the Tillinghast Factory. About twenty-five mill houses were built for the workers and, in its heyday, the mill village was a thriving community. Allen and Joseph Tillinghast ran the mill most successfully during its long and varied career.

The factory stood in the valley, near the headwaters of Hunts River. It was a four story building. The walls of the two lower stories were of stone, with wood above. For over fifty years after the factory was built, its power was derived from a great overshot water wheel, twenty-five feet in diameter and five feet thick. This wheel was turned by a large volume of water, carried via the nearby mill trench through the wooden sluice gate or penstock.

Cotton yarn was spun in the factory and the womenfold of Frenchtown wove this yarn into cloth on their own hand looms. Later the mill was used for the manufacture of printed cloth. But that industry was also discarded in 1871, when machinery was installed to make carpet twine and warp. At one time the owner was Benjamin Moon, and old-timers remember when it was called Moon's Mill, as well as Tillinghast Factory. In the early 1900's the mill was closed forever.

In 1912 the property was purchased by Thomas Barber. He removed the machinery and tore down the mill. Since then it has become overgrown and is hardly distinguishable as a factory and mill village. It is now the property of Mrs. Arthur Carr. The ruins are often mistaken, or misrepresented, as the remains of the Huguenot settlement. What is left of the first cotton mill in town lies about a quarter of a mile behind the Frenchtown School.

### THE SHORE MILL

In 1827 a company was formed, consisting of Daniel Harris, agent, Ezra Pollard, superintendent, Dr. James H. Eldredge, Albert C. Greene, Fones and Wicks Hill, C. W. and Daniel Greene, and James P. Austin. The company built a mill at the foot of King Street, near the jail. It was called

the East Greenwich Manufacturing Company. The mill was a stone edifice, four stories high and fifty by one hundred feet in size. In it seven thousand spindles and twenty looms were set up. This was the second cotton mill in town, the first being the Tillinghast Factory. The East Greenwich Manufacturing Company failed in a few years and the building was destroyed by fire in 1839.

The ruins and site were purchased by J. C. Sanford of North Kingstown, in partnership with Waterman and Arnold of Providence. They evidently planned to re-build the mill but, after laying a foundation, they abandoned the idea. The land, with the foundation was sold to Peirce, Salisbury and Company, who erected the mill which still stands.

In 1845 the mill was sold to J. C. Peckham of Providence, who operated it until 1849. He then removed the machinery and sold the building, in 1859, to Thomas J. Hill. The latter built an addition as large again as the original building and renamed the concern "The Bay Mill". He afterward gave the mill to his two sons, Albert and William Hill. They operated it for several years. In 1898 the mill was popularly called "The Shore Mill" and was running full time, employing many local mill-hands. Later the firm of Hill and La Cross manufactured elastic and, even more recently, the building has been occupied by the Reukert Manufacturing Company.

### THE DRYSALTERS

On Main Street near Greene Street, C. W. and E. Greene, with William P. Salisbury, built a brick factory in 1836 and called it the Union Mill. In the beginning they manufactured broadcloth. But this venture failed and, in 1840, Benjamin Cozzens acquired the mill. He built an addition and had machinery brought from England to run a cotton mill. He, too, failed and many Greenwich businessmen lost money in the venture. The mill was then purchased by Adams and Butterworth, who renamed it "The Orion Mill", and began to print cloth. In 1888 Joseph Dews took over the mill and ran it until 1894, at which time it was purchased by E. Field-

ing Jones. It was at this time that it became known as "The Providence Drysalters". This company employed a large number of men and many people recall when this was a very active mill. William B. Reid was superintendent from 1894 until 1937. A native of Scotland, Mr. Reid arrived in East Greenwich in 1894 and started to mix dyes at the mill in two large copper kettles. Orders came in so fast that it was soon necessary to enlarge the plant. John Reid, brother of William, was also brought here to mix colors. They produced products of the highest quality for use in the textile industry.

In 1939 the premises were taken over by the Hercules Powder Company, a division of Dupont. After five or six years, this company moved elsewhere. Whereupon the mill was rented piecemeal and additions were made to accommodate the lessees.

What was left of the old mill was rebuilt to house the Efco Manufacturing Company, Inc. and the Ross Aker Furniture Store. The Efco Company, headed by Monroe Feiring of Warwick, manufactured metal components and employed forty-six persons. In 1959 a spectacular fire destroyed the old mill and Efco had to seek new quarters, which took them out of town. Ross Aker remodeled his section of the building. While this was being accomplished Mr. Aker set up a temporary store in the old Bostitch factory on the corner of Division and Duke Streets. It was over a year before the store returned to its old location on the Main Street.

Long ago, when this mill was called the Union Mill, a row of houses were built on the south side of Greene Street and the west side of Main Street for occupancy by mill-workers. These houses have been demolished in late years to make way for the new shopping center.

### THE BLEACHERY

In 1840 a Mr. Thornly built and established a factory at the south end of town and called it Green Dale Bleachery. Shortly afterwards it was purchased by George G. Adams.. He converted it into a print works for the printing of mouselin



de laine. It was the first such printing plant in the country. These de laines made handsome dress-goods. Mr. Adams was sharp enough to have the tickets on the goods made out in French, so the ladies of the day thought they were buying imported goods. Adams employed Scotch and English printers, who were skillful at their trade. He branched into calico printing and was successful in this venture until the plant was burned in 1850.

The mill was rebuilt and Mr. Adams resumed printing until 1853 when the firm of Adams and Butterworth was formed. They produced "Madder Prints" until 1856, at which time Butterworth took over operation of the business until fire again destroyed it in 1858. The owners again rebuilt and leased the bleachery to Theodore Schroeder, who operated it until 1862, when Adams and Butterworth again went into partnership.

In 1885 the Bolton Manufacturing Company was organized to succeed Adams and Butterworth. Their superintendent was William W. Farrington, a native of Manchester, England, who had learned his trade as a finisher of cotton goods in his native land.

Several other concerns rented the mill for varying intervals until 1902, when Peter Corr of Taunton took over the mill. At this time it was called the Greenwich Bleachery and was the main source of work for laboring immigrants in this area. Following his period, Thomas Hatch, brother-in-law of Peter Corr, supervised the running of the mill.

The Greenwich Printing and Dyeing Company, a branch of Calvine Mills, Inc., was the next owner. They employed 183 persons to finish cotton and cotton-rayon products. In 1957 the mill closed completely, the result of labor troubles, throwing many people out of work. In 1959, the Calvine Company opened once again.

The name of the mill has changed innumerable times, as have the owners and operators, but to the native of East

Greenwich it will ever be "The Bleachery", "Bleachery Hill", and "The Bleachery Whistle".

### COIR BRUSH FACTORY

It was in 1873 that John Earnshaw of this town began the manufacture of coir brushes. Coir itself was made from the fibrous covering of the coconut. Natives of Africa and India soaked this fibrous material in water until it was pliable, then twisted and rolled it until it formed a coarse thread which could be made into skeins. These were packed and shipped here in bales weighing 250 pounds each. Four coir brushes could be made from one pound of material.

Mr. Earnshaw invented a machine for folding skeins of coir into layers, compressing them tightly. This machine, which could be operated by one man, produced 400 brushes daily. These brushes were used mostly for scrubbing and were called "Coir Scrubbing Brushes". They were not retailed here, but were sold to the National Manufacturing Co. of Boston, who served as distributors.

Of versatile and inventive turn of mind, John Earnshaw had other inventions in different fields. One was a flour sifter, for which he received royalties; another was a machine called "The Earnshaw Needle Loom", for weaving ribbon and narrow fabrics. This machine he sold to the owners of a New London, Connecticut mill.

John Earnshaw was the grandfather of Elmer Earnshaw of this town.

### WINE MANUFACTURE

Another small manufacturing operation was run by Albert A. Hall. He employed several men in the operation of running the wine press to produce fine sacramental wine. Previously he had a boot and shoe shop in the old Arcade Building. He was the grandfather of A. Anthony Hall, Hamilton Hall, and Mrs. Leita Hall Eddy of this town.

## POLLARD MILL

Ezra Pollard, who had been superintendent of the East Greenwich Manufacturing Company, left in 1836 to establish his own mill on the northeast corner of Duke and Division Streets. The building was a two-story wooden structure and had two sets of machinery for the manufacture of Kentucky jeans.

After a few years, Mr. Pollard sold the mill to Richard G. Howland. This building was destroyed by fire, but a new brick edifice was erected on the site by Mr. Howland. His mill had three sets of machinery and was operated until 1868 when, once again, it was destroyed by fire. He again rebuilt the mill, which later became Bostitch and is now the Shop-O-Mat.

## THE ARNOLD MACHINE SHOP

A two-story wooden building was built on the southeast corner of Division and Marlborough Streets in 1845. It was owned by Asa Arnold, a well-known local machinist. When he established this machine shop he was already famed for his inventions, especially the compound motion, or differential wheels, applied to the cotton speeder, which he had invented some fifty years previous to the opening of the shop.

In the little building on Division Street, he made mechanics' tools, machines for making pressed brick, and machines for the cotton industry. He also repaired machinery for the mills in the vicinity. In 1850 his son, Benjamin Arnold, ran the business and he invented machinery for knitting seines and fishing nets.

The building fell into decay and was removed some years ago. The site is now part of the U. S. Military Reserve area, just behind the Varnum Armory.

## THE EAST GREENWICH DAIRY COMPANY

This company was formed here in East Greenwich, on a co-operative basis, in 1923. In February of that year, Hugh

E. McGraw was named manager. He had already made a name for himself as manager of the Aquidneck Dairy in Newport. In September, 1923, the Dairy company purchased from Luke Connole a large tract of land on Duke Street. Here a fine modern dairy plant was erected and the company, under the able direction of Mr. McGraw, manufactured the finest ice-cream in the state of Rhode Island.

In May, 1925, an ice-cream parlor was opened on the west side of main Street, near Dedford Street. People came from near and far to taste the delectable cream in a variety of flavors. Later, the company built a brick building, for retailing milk and ice-cream, just north of the Industrial National Bank. They operated this establishment until the pressure of their wholesale business forced them to sell out.

The sanitary, modern dairy plant on Duke Street is a model of its kind. In 1939 Mr. McGraw was named president of this company which he had helped to build from a small business into a million dollar enterprise. An office was built on Marlborough Street just behind the dairy plant and the company today employs some seventy-five workers. The company purchases milk from farmers in the area, processes it, and ships it via refrigerated trucks all over the state. East Greenwich Dairy trucks are a familiar sight on Rhode Island highways. In 1956 the manufacture of ice-cream was discontinued, as all available space was needed for the milk business.

At the death of Hugh E. McGraw in 1956, his son, J. Vincent, was named president. Two other sons, Herbert and Hugh, Jr., also assist in the operation of the firm.

#### BOSTITCH, INC.

An industrial fairy tale is the story of this business which so strongly influenced the economy of the town of East Greenwich. In 1898 Thomas A. Briggs of Arlington, Massachusetts, working in a lean-to on the side of his barn, invented a new kind of wire stapling machine, which he called the Boston Wire Stitcher. A company, with the same name as the stapler,



was formed. It soon outgrew the small quarters and moved to Woonsocket, Rhode Island, and from thence to East Greenwich in 1904.

From 1904 to 1946, the plant was located on the Warwick East Greenwich line at Division and Duke Streets. The wire stitchers were manufactured exclusively until 1906, when the first stapling machines went into production. In 1914 the first stapler appeared with the name Bostitch on it. As time went on, Bostitch came out with many models: heavy duty, hand operated, as well as foot and motor operated. Today the company offers over eight hundred models of every size and for every purpose. It is the largest concern of its kind and has sales representatives throughout the world.

In 1946, much to the consternation of the townspeople, the firm decided to move to Pawcatuck, Connecticut. The loss was sorely felt, economically, in town. But, at the end of ten years, the directors at Bostitch made the decision to return to East Greenwich. A handsome, modern manufacturing plant was built on an eighty-four acre tract of land on South County trail. It is now the largest one-floor factory in the New England area. The structure is one-sixth of a mile long and one-tenth of a mile wide. The company employs over seven hundred workers.

For the most of its lifetime, Bostitch has had as its president Joseph D. A. Whalen of Warwick. Mr. Whalen retired from that post a few years ago and now serves as a member of the board of directors. Emmet G. Gardner is now president of the company. Mrs. Marion Lawrence Small and Mr. Leonard D. Lawrence, grandchildren of Thomas Briggs, live at Potowomut. Mr. Lawrence is vice-president of Bostitch. Another grandson of the founder, Dr. Robert P. Lawrence, lives in New Jersey.

The town of East Greenwich enthusiastically welcomed back Bostitch, Inc. with a week of public celebration. As we drive along South County Trail and admire the Bostitch factory, we feel that this is indeed an industrial fairy tale—complete with happy ending.

## ESTATE OF W. R. FARRINGTON

The Ferricup Mill was established in 1889 by its owner, W. U. Farrington. Mr. Farrington was a native of England. He started out with a small factory covering three hundred square feet. It grew to be the largest plant devoted to the manufacture of destrines and gums in the state. Mr. Farrington died in 1916. His son, Lewis Farrington, took over the company. In 1916 the mill was destroyed by fire and had to be rebuilt.

At the present time this plant manufactures finishing specialities and foundry core binders. The company employs fifteen persons. The present manager is Carleton W. Merritt.

## THE GREENWICH MILLS

Like the Ferricup Mill, this mill stands on the Warwick side of the line, but had a strong influence on the industrial and economic life of this town. Granville A. Beals came to East Greenwich from New York in 1917 to establish this woolen mill, of which he was the sole owner. Operations started in 1917, but the big mill, on the corner of Duane and Ladd Streets, was not built until 1918. At the height of its success one hundred and seventy looms were in operation by over four hundred hands. They produced a very superior worsted cloth for men's suiting and "Greenwich Worsted" was a well-known product throughout the country.

Mr. Beals sold the business and building to the Verney Corporation in 1945 and they continued to operate as a woolen mill until 1951. The mill was then purchased by Niles-Bement Co., a branch of Pratt-Whitney. Since then numerous small manufacturing companies have operated in sections of the once thriving Greenwich Mills. General Fittings now occupies a large part of the building.

## RUEKERT MANUFACTURING COMPANY

The Ruekert Manufacturing Company opened a branch office and factory here in 1919. It leased the old Marlbor-

ough Street Chapel and manufactured plush boxes for jewelry. The company employed twenty-five girls and remained here until 1925.

In 1946 the company returned to East Greenwich and leased the old Shore Mill on King Street. George K. Deware is president of the Ruekert Manufacturing Company. Joseph Carroll is the treasurer. At present this firm manufactures jewelry cases and displays, as well as tool and instrument cases. There are sixty-one employees.

### THE GREENWICH SHIPYARD

The boatyard at the Warwick-East Greenwich line has long been a point of activity for the boat-building trade in New England. Frederick S. Nock, who made its reputation, was born in Birmingham, England, in 1871. He graduated from the British and Foreign Society in London, came to this country in 1894, and founded the Narragansett Agency in Providence. In 1902 he became the owner of the boatyard in East Greenwich. This yard was noted in the yachting world as a winter haven and marine hospital for some of the finest pleasure yachts on the Atlantic coast.

In 1939 Thomas Harris and Roberts Parsons bought the yard from Charles Bent, who was president of F. S. Nock, Inc. at the time. They continued to offer expert construction and outstanding workmanship, turning out many fine vessels for the government during World War II.

The yard again changed hands in 1957, becoming the property of the Beetle Boat Company which constructs ocean-going yawls made of fiberglass. There are fifty-three persons employed in the yard.

There are other small thriving manufacturers in the town, such as the Graham Manufacturing Co. on Bridge Street. Richmond Viall, Jr., is its president. The company makes hair clippers, vises, and electronic components. It employs twenty people. On Duke Street is Madison Products, Inc., employing five persons in work on copper and brass.

Fred Duncan is the owner. The Harris Textile Machinery Co. is on South Main Street, just north of the Bleachery. Stephen Harris is general manager. Nine people are employed, doing machine work on small parts and designing and building special machinery. More recently the Gagliardi Research Corporation, headed by Donald Gagliardi, has been established on South Road. This firm is engaged in chemical research and is fast growing into an important industry in the town.

Industry has played a large part in the history of East Greenwich. Native New Englanders, as well as immigrants from Ireland, Sweden, and Italy, found in these mills a means of livelihood. Other small factories have come and gone. The ones mentioned stand out as beacons in the history of economic development in the town of East Greenwich.





MAWNEY HOUSE — 1789 — FIRST EAST GREENWICH POST OFFICE

## CHAPTER XX

### *Utilities, Transportation and Banking*

#### ELECTRICITY

For many years lighting was a matter of personal responsibility. Candles, whale oil lamps, and kerosene lamps were used progressively for illumination. There was little gas lighting in the homes here, but in 1880 there were a few gas street-lights. The first electric lighting in a community in the United States was in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1879. Such lighting did not come to the city of Providence until 1882. In 1888 the Phoenix Electric Light and Coal Company of East Greenwich was organized by Joseph Dews. The plant was located on lower Division Street. It furnished power for five hundred lights. In 1890 new dynamos were added and sufficient power was generated for fifteen hundred lights. Joseph Dews failed in his local mill business and the town took over the power plant for a short time, doing business as the East Greenwich Electric Light Company. In 1889, on the commercial circuit,

the price was eight dollars per year for sixteen candlepower incandescent lights.

The Narragansett Electric Company, which was gradually merging all the small power companies, purchased the East Greenwich concern in 1895 and operated it under the name of the East Greenwich Electric Light Company until 1900, when they officially called it the Narragansett Electric Company, as it is known today.

### THE TELEPHONE

The telephone came to East Greenwich in 1880. The Providence Telephone Exchange Company opened the East Greenwich exchange in the office of the Rhode Island *Pendulum*, where it maintained a pay station. In 1881 the local telephone directory listed nineteen subscribers, of which only five were residential. One of these was at the Governor Greene Farm on Division Street.

There were no telephone numbers in the beginning, a crank was used to get the operator, and when you finished you had to be sure to say "that is all" and move the switch so that it would be ready for the next user. The first telephone switchboard operator in town was Mrs. Elizabeth (Balfour) Buckley. The pay telephone was listed under the name of the Rhode Island *Pendulum* and C. Carpenter, Main Street. Then, Tom Boardman's grocery store was listed as a pay station until 1896, when the building at 248 Main Street became the telephone exchange and remained so until 1952.

The Providence Telephone Company acquired property in East Greenwich in 1902 and the New England Telephone merged with this smaller company in 1921. In 1932 the exchange was called Greenwich instead of East Greenwich and the list of local subscribers was included in the Providence directory. In 1930 the business office was moved from 248 Main Street to the Browning Block on the corner of King and Main Streets.

For over fifty years the "hello girls" did a wonderful community job. They located doctors at all hours for frantic

parents of young children; they alerted the volunteer firemen when needed; they cooperated with the police department in emergencies and, all in all, gave such friendly and personal service that the advent of the dial system left a void in lives of older residents.

In 1952 the exchange name was again changed, from Greenwich to Turner-4, to become part of the great mathematical system which will eventually be nationwide, and dial service came to town. A handsome colonial brick building was built on Church Street in 1952, to house the electronic maze necessary to provide efficient, modern telephone service.

### WATER SUPPLY

East Greenwich is fortunate in its abundant supply of the finest quality of drinking water. The Kent County Water Authority is the organization behind the quality and the quantity of the supply. The group was created on June 13, 1950, by the merger of the Pawtuxet Valley Water Company, the East Greenwich Water Supply, Coventry Water Company, and the Good Earth Company at Carr's Pond. The Authority is composed of a board of five members. It is a quasi-mutual organization, with profits being put back into the company for improvement and equipment.

The primary sources of water in this area are two large wells, one on each side of Hunts River. This is ample supply for the whole of East Greenwich and the area up through the center of the city of Warwick. Available as additional sources in case of shortage are Carr's Pond and Scituate Reservoir, both of which are connected for emergency use.

Although the town of North Kingstown does not draw on our supply, there is standby connection with them, and with the Quonset Naval Air Station, in case of need. During World War II, the Naval Air Station used two million gallons of water each day without straining the available resources in the area.

The softness of the water, its good taste, and its abundance are decided assets to the utility service of East Greenwich.

#### TRANSPORTATION—YESTERDAY AND TODAY

From the beginning of its history, it was necessary for residents of the town to go back and forth to Newport, the starting point and home base for the first settlers. The journey across the bay was a long one and infrequent trips were made in early years; but, as the prospect of being a port of some magnitude loomed in the vision of the men of East Greenwich, small boats and packets plied the waters of the bay in great numbers.

Land travel progressed from horseback to stage coach. The stages were carrying mail along the eastern seaboard with fair regularity as early as 1760. The Updike Tavern on Main Street was the regular stop for the stage, which carried passengers as well as mail.

The average citizen of East Greenwich had to be satisfied with a horse and a rough, hand-hewn farm cart for his transportation. As late as 1797, the one and only sulky in town was owned by Dr. Peter Turner. There were no coaches in the whole of Kent County. There were plenty of horses though, and black-smiths did a thriving business in shoeing well into the twentieth century.

The Stonington Railroad extended its line through East Greenwich in 1837. In 1878 there was a waiting station at Potowomut Cove, as well as the one on Duke Street. In 1888 the Providence and Boston Railroad took over the Stonington line and, in 1893, it became the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, as it is today. Passenger service and freighting between East Greenwich and Providence assumed large proportions. The station on Duke Street was rebuilt to its present appearance in 1898.

In 1889 the Main Street running through town was macadamized. Road machines and equipment were being used by the town to keep back streets in fair repair for vehi-



cular travel. In 1898, the electric railroad was in prospect for the town and, by 1900, the Sea View Railroad was in operation. The Sea View waiting station stood near Second Avenue on the Post Road. On September 15, 1900, the first trolley car ran between East Greenwich and Narragansett Pier on this new line. At the Sea View station, connections could be made with the United Electric Railway for points north. The trolley line went into Providence and freight trolleys were used, as well as those for passengers. Connections could be made in Apponaug to go to Rocky Point or to the car-barn in Clyde. All rides were ten cents.

By 1928 it was necessary to rebuild the road between East Greenwich and Apponaug. Then it was that we lost so many of the lovely elms which shaded the old Post Road. Then, too, the trolley tracks were removed and the era of the bus service of the United Electric Railway eventually came to East Greenwich in 1937. It was soon necessary, in the interest of transportation, to remove the elms along our own Main Street, so that the road could be widened.

The coming of the automobile and the advent of the Naval Air Station at Quonset have increased traffic on the main thoroughfare to frightening proportions. This, more than any other change, would send a re-incarnated ancestor scurrying back to the peace and security of his grave!

## BANKING

By an act of the General Assembly in October, 1805, the first bank was established in East Greenwich. It was called the Rhode Island Central Bank and was situated in a house (since torn down) just south of the Town Hall. A huge vault was built in the cellar. The lock on the vault measured fourteen by seven and one half inches. The key, an enormous thing, is now at the Varnum Museum. The first cashier was Col. William Greene. The authorized capital was fifty thousand dollars. Ethan Clarke was the first president of the bank. In 1840, when Wanton Casey was cashier, the bank was moved to the corner of Division and Main Streets,

where the Varnum Armory now stands. Later, this bank was located in the building where the Hill Funeral Home is today. The bank served the town for fifty-two years and it was not until 1919 that its charter was forfeited.

The second bank to be incorporated was the East Greenwich Institute for Savings, in 1849. It was at first located in the same rooms as the R. I. Central Bank but was re-located in the R. I. Exchange Bank in 1855. Later it was moved to the Spencer Block (where Little Tot Shop stands) and finally occupied quarters in Updike, about 1896. Leading business men and citizens comprised the list of incorporators and John C. Harris was its first president. In 1856 the bank was re-organized and became the Greenwich Bank, Inc., only to change again, in 1865, to the Greenwich National Bank.

The Rhode Island Exchange Bank was incorporated in 1852 under state law. At that time there were no national banks. This bank, too, started out in the building just south of the Town Hall. James B. Peirce was the first president. This bank had a short life, as it failed in 1860. The stockholders lost all of their holdings and the depositors about 33%.

The first large bank in town was the Manufacturers Trust Company which absorbed, in 1900, both the Greenwich National Bank and the East Greenwich Institute for Savings. Samuel M. Knowles was then manager, Howard V. Allen, his assistant and George R. Hanaford, the bookkeeper.

In 1906 this bank merged with the Union Trust Company. A year later, during the national panic, the doors of the bank were closed. Soon re-organized, the bank opened again.

In May, 1924, the Union Trust moved into its new brick building at 200 Main Street.

Another merger was made in 1951 when the Providence National Bank, second oldest bank in the United States, having obtained its charter from George Washington in 1792, merged with the Union Trust. This bank was called the Providence Union National Bank. Elliott Hopkins was its

manager until 1954, and Emil Wellen, who retired recently, served as teller for many years. In 1953 the Providence Union National merged with the Industrial Trust Company and the name at present is the Industrial National Bank.

The East Greenwich Savings and Loan Association was organized in 1914. Its first meeting was in April and Albert H. Esten was its first president. Other incorporators were: Frank O. Bergstrom, J. D. A. Whalen and Henry P. Eldredge, Jr. Assets at the second annual meeting were twelve thousand dollars. Today assets of this non-commercial bank are over two million dollars. William L. Sharpe was long the director of the institution and his hardware store on Main Street was the only office the bank had for many years. Miss Florence Dugdale, who was associated with the company for many years, resigned in 1953. In 1934 Walter A. Cook was elected president and Otto W. Olson, Jr. treasurer and teller. The directors are all men from this area, and the East Greenwich Savings and Loan Association is a most successful local venture: In 1959 this bank moved from the Love Building, on the corner of Main and Montrose Streets, to a handsome new colonial style building on South Main Street.

The newest bank in town is the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company which opened a branch here in June, 1956. They built a modern bank building on property which they bought from Kenneth Convery. The Convery homestead was moved to Second Street to make room for the bank.

Three men have played important roles in the history of banking in East Greenwich but equally important is the part that each of them has played in the role of public spirited citizens of the town. The first of these was Samuel Mumford Knowles. Born in Charlestown, R. I. in 1835, he came to East Greenwich in 1851 and soon after married Sarah Peirce. Mr. Knowles was a scholar and dearly loved his adopted town. He served as president of the Town Council for thirteen consecutive years and was State Senator from East Greenwich from 1882 to 1885. Mr. Knowles was a self-educated lawyer and an expert on probate matters. He was also an

authority on town records and regulations. For a number of years he served as judge of the Probate Court. He was cashier at the East Greenwich Institute for Savings (later Manufacturer's Trust Company) and later manager of this bank until he resigned in 1908. Soon after his marriage Mr. Knowles built a handsome mansion on Peirce Street, just south of the Kentish Guard Armory, where he lived until his death in 1919.

George R. Hanaford was another man connected with the bank who did a great deal for his adopted town. He was born in Manchester, New Hampshire in 1874 and came to Greenwich with his family two years later. He graduated from the East Greenwich Academy and went to Bryant & Stratton's for a business course. In 1897 he married Miss Jennie Williams.

Mr. Hanaford first went into the brokerage business in Providence but returned in 1900 to become bookkeeper and then assistant manager of the Union Trust Company. He left the bank in 1924 to become a partner with Howard V. Allen in the real estate and insurance business.

George Hanaford's political career began when he was a page in the Rhode Island Senate in 1888. He was elected representative from East Greenwich from 1910 to 1911, and served as State Senator in 1912. He was elected member of the Town Council in 1928, became its president in 1932 and remained in that position until 1944. He died in 1948. He loved East Greenwich dearly and remembered the town most generously in his will.

The third banker who has done much for East Greenwich, oddly enough, is a resident of Warwick. Howard V. Allen was born here in 1878, the son of Charles and Ellen Allen. He, too, graduated from the East Greenwich Academy. In 1893 he was a clerk in the Commercial National Bank in Providence. In 1903 he married Alice Whitford Butts.

Mr. Allen was made assistant to Mr. Knowles at the Manufacturerers Trust Company, which had recently merged the



East Greenwich National Bank and the Institute of Savings. This was in 1900. In 1908 Mr. Allen became manager of the Union Trust Company, which had succeeded the Manufacturers Trust, and remained in that position until he retired in 1949. Since then he has given his time to his insurance and real estate business.

Mr. Allen has been civic-minded in the giving of his time and energy to the many demands made upon his ability to organize and see a project through. His interests are many, the Visiting Nurse Association, the East Greenwich Free Library, the Varnum Armory, the Continentals and last, but not least, the Varnum House Museum. This museum has been much more than a hobby. It is an accomplishment seldom attained in a lifetime. There are few museums in any town in New England that can boast of a more carefully selected and authenticated collection of tangible history.

These three men, bankers by vocation, citizens and benefactors of East Greenwich by avocation, certainly deserve mention in this history of our town.



STANHOPE HOUSE — 1755

## CHAPTER XXI

### *Retail Business and Amusement Enterprises in East Greenwich*

Selling or trading goods, directly between craftsman and consumer, was a practice which began to fade in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Up to that time, the bartering of one product for another was more common than paying cash for goods received. As this practice died out, the retailer came into being—the middle man—who handled a variety of goods from the manufacturer for the convenience of the consumer. The speed-up of transportation was largely responsible for this change. Heretofore, the incoming boats were the prime source of goods from outside the area. Now, with the coming of the Stonington (later the New York, New Haven and Hartford) Railroad in 1837, goods were made more easily available. Providence came nearer and the wholesaler or manufacturer could get merchandise to East Greenwich in a few hours.

Previous to 1840 there were, of course, sundry small businesses in town. Samuel Bennett was a cooper here as early as 1684, Preserved Peirce had a tailor shop in 1752. There were two periwig shops in town—William Richardson's in 1764 and Mr. Edward's in 1776. Dutee Weaver was also a tailor here before 1822 and his son, who was apprenticed to tailors in Providence and Nantucket, opened his own shop in the Central Bank Building in 1822. But it was not until 1837 that the stores began to spring up in number along Main Street, from Division to London Street. From 1837 to 1879 the town grew business-wise. Although still considered a farm community, merchants established profitable shops and served the population of the town which, in 1860, numbered 2833 people, comprising 536 families.

Tailoring must have been a lucrative trade, because in 1843 Colonel William Bodfish, a Kentish Guardsman, established a new tailor shop in town. Later, in 1870, he branched out into millinery and dry goods. In 1878 he built a business block on the northwest corner of Main and Court Streets, which still stands. Other tailors of around that period were Stukely B. Wickes and J. L. Stanton.

The hardware trade offered opportunity here, and in 1850 Enoch and William J. Lovell took over the tinware business of James Pollard. They did so well that, in 1862, they built their own store on Main Street, about where Benson's Plumbing shop is today. William R. Sharpe opened a hardware store on the corner of King and Main Streets in 1878. He died in 1897, leaving the store to his son, William L., who ran it until his death. Since that time it has been under the management of Raymond Crompton, who operates it for the Sharpe family. In 1876 Caleb Hill and Son opened a tinware shop. Three years later they established an undertaking business. Caleb's son, Charles, ran the place until his death, at which time his son, Frank, took over. At the death of Frank Hill, the business went out of the family. It is now run by George C. Cranston. The Hills, however, were not the only early undertakers in town. In 1881 James A. Capron, under-

taker, had an advertisement in the local tax book which offered, "a fine hearse with one or two jet black horses".

Levi Fitts was the partner of John P. Roberts in the business of household furnishings. William G. Browning, as a young man, went to work for Roberts and Fitts and, in 1871, he became a partner and ran the business with Mr. Fitts. In 1876 he built the Browning Block, on the corner of Main and King Streets. Mr. Browning ran a thriving business until his death, when his sons, William, Walter, and Frederick conducted the store until they sold out in 1939 to Howard G. Stark. Meantime, they had moved their store to the building that Brownings' now occupies. Mr. Stark remodeled and enlarged the store until it now covers three floors and is one of the most beautiful furniture and gift shops in New England.

Many local men found a remunerative living in the grocery business. In 1848 Russell Vaughn had a going business in groceries; in 1860 Edward Stanhope had a small grocery store at the corner of Main and Armory Streets, which he ran when he wasn't "town-clerking"; later, in this same spot, Harry Eggleston, a cigar-maker, had a smoke shop; A. and J. C. Nichols were in business with groceries in 1872. By 1878, there were several more grocery stores; George W. Arnold, T. J. Tilley, W. A. Hanaford (who succeeded H. M. Lillibridge), A. D. Miner and L. M. Bateman, all were successful grocers. To East Greenwich at this time came E. A. Gould from Dover, Vermont, and he, too, opened a grocery store. In 1876 commodities were low in price. Potatoes were seventy cents a bushel; apples, twenty-five cents a bushel; huckleberries, four and five cents a quart; butter, thirty cents a pound, and eggs, eighteen cents a dozen. At this time the population of the town was about 4000. Later, the Gorman brothers, Daniel and Joseph did a profitable business in their market at the corner of Main and Queen Streets. F. O. Bergstrom and, later, his son, George, ran a grocery store on the site of the Big Star Market. Joseph D'Attore was a grocer with a store at the corner of Queen and Duke Streets in 1905. John Benedetti had a market at the corner of Long and Duke Streets. Fogel's Market served the south-end folks. Arthur



Izzi opened his store in 1923, building a brick edifice just north of the railroad station on Duke Street. This market is now owned and operated by George Anderson. The Munson Brothers operated a grocery store and market on the east side of Main Street, just north of London Street, for almost fifty years. William and Oscar Munson founded the store in 1910 and, after William's death, Oscar continued to run it until it closed in 1958.

David Wilbur had a dry goods store here in 1860. In the seventies, J. P. Roberts, A. W. Howland, George H. Fuller and Fitts and Galvin were each proprietors of such establishments. Miner's Drygoods Store was opened in 1891 and, in 1897, J. D. Miner took over the business his father had started. At this time Rueben Hart began to clerk at Miner's. In 1937 Mr. Hart bought the store from J. D. Miner. Hart's Department Store was more recently operated by Reuben Hart's daughter, Mrs. Marianne Hart Bradshaw, until they went out of business this year.

John R. Knowles, J. S. Godfrey, and T. G. Allen were all owners of hay, grain and feed stores in the 1870's. Livery and carriages were for hire by Samuel Tillinghast, Joshua Arnold, James Fones, and Peleg Babcock. Previous to 1890, G. F. Goodwin had a cabinet-making shop just south of the Brick House. R. H. Champlin had, for a number of years, a planing mill near the Yacht Club, where the Champlin Lumber Company is still in operation. An early florist in town was Benjamin Crompton, whose greenhouses were on Crompton Avenue. In 1914 James Hay built a good size greenhouse on Eldredge Avenue. After Mr. Hays' death, this business was purchased by Harold Greene. Mr. Greene enlarged his facilities by buying the Lindberg Greenhouse on South Main Street. In recent years Mr. Greene sold both greenhouses to Scott, the Florist, Inc. of Providence.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century there were two well patronized ice cream parlors in town, one operated by Henry Fones and the other by John Bagley. Fones went into business in 1898 in the store that Earnshaw had vacated,

in the block between Queen and Long Streets. In the 1890's, John Bagley had an ice cream emporium on Main Street in the Love Building, across from the Town Hall. Later, John moved to a location across the street from Hart's, but south-enders remember with joy the establishment of his ice cream shop on Rocky Hollow Road. John made his own cream, the likes of which you have never since tasted. For impecunious youngsters he could produce a two cent cone of ice cream that held as much as the ten cent ones offered today. John had a horse and cart, too, and on hot summer evenings the tinkle of the bell, hanging from the roof of the wagon, would send youngsters scurrying into the house for a bowl and fifteen cents. For this amount the huge bowl would be heaped full of the delicious confection.

The distinction of being the oldest established business in East Greenwich goes to the Earnshaw Drug Company, which has been in continuous operation since 1852. In 1842 a small apothecary shop was started where Ralph's Paint Shop is now. Albert J. Congdon was the owner. He sold the store to two young men, Farnham and Cundall. In 1852 the store was licensed as the first pharmacy in town. The two partners soon separated, Mr. Farnham opening a store in Wickford. Frank Cundall stayed here and hired Elmer Earnshaw to work for him. Young Earnshaw soon became a registered pharmacist and purchased one half interest in the drug store. In 1877 his brother, Arthur Earnshaw, started to work there. After he was registered as a pharmacist, he purchased one third interest in the store. It moved to its present location on Main Street in 1898. The firm became known as Cundall, Earnshaw and Company. Arthur Earnshaw became manager in 1899 and, in 1909, purchased Frank Cundall's interest. Mr. Earnshaw ran the business as Earnshaw Drug Company until his retirement in 1951, a period of sixty-five years. He was until his death in 1959, a public spirited citizen with the interest of East Greenwich at heart. He served as a member of the school committee for thirty-eight years. His son, Elmer, now carries on the business in the fine modern pharmacy on Main Street. Another generation, the third, is now

represented by Owen Earnshaw, a registered pharmacist at the drug store.

Greene's Drug Store was in business in the 1880's on Main Street, just south of the Court House. Later this pharmacy had a succession of owners including Frederick Brightman, Charles McGettrick and Bernard Murray.

For many years Frederick Whitford ran a drug store which is now Koch's. George A. Koch started his pharmacy about 1918 and continued to run it until his retirement in 1944, at which time he sold out to Raymond Crothers, the present owner. This store has done a profitable and reputable business for forty years. More recently, Louis Piericini, a native of East Greenwich, established the Kent Drug Store on Main Street and the Thorpe Drug Store is now a part of the new shopping center near Greene Street.

Other businesses have come and gone: the millinery establishments of Miss Young, Mrs. Griffin, and Dolly Duffy; the watchmaking shop of Edgar Frey, across from the fire station; the five and ten cent store first located across from Hart's Store and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Henry. After Mr. Henry's death, his wife continued to run the business and moved to a location just south of Sharpe's Hardware Store and later to the building where Silverman's Shoe Store is now. Mrs. Henry was always kindness personified to both young and old. She stayed in business for over fifty years, retiring a few years ago. Tom Papadopoulos ran the Oriole Candy Kitchen for many years and Annie Turk was a kindly lady who had a small candy store just south of London Street, on Main Street.

William McClure started a printing business about 1895. He had been with the *Pendulum* previous to that time. In the 1920's he combined a record shop with the printing business. That was the only music shop in town until Frank Hathaway opened shop across from the Town Hall about 1935. In 1958 he moved to the South Main Street location. Mr. McClure's printing shop is now operated by Walter Shogren.

Real estate and insurance have long been lucrative ventures conducted by citizens of our town. The Farmer's Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Rhode Island, incorporated in 1851, was located in East Greenwich. Benjamin B. Thurston was the president, Nicholas Fry, vice-president, Silas Weaver, secretary, and Joseph Winsor, treasurer. Thomas Tilley had an insurance business here in 1877 and the firm became Tilley and Reynolds in 1881. Their office was in the old post office, where Maille's Bakery now stands. Moses Shippee also had an insurance business on Main Street, just south of the Greenwich Hotel. In 1912 Howard V. Allen and George R. Hanaford went into partnership in the real estate and insurance business. Later they bought the insurance business of Moses Shippee. Allen and Hanaford are still a going firm, although Mr. Hanaford died some years ago. Jesse Lillibridge is another man who has been in the real estate and insurance business here for some years.

It would take several volumes to enumerate and enlarge upon the various enterprises that have come and gone in this town. Those mentioned were here long enough to make a lasting impression on the business life of the town.

There have been many barbers in town, Sam Baldino, Leo Petteruti, Joe Mangano, and Albert Rollinson, to name a few. Dean of all the barbers in town is Gus Miller. He started his shop in the building just south of the Greenwich Hotel on January 1, 1895. He moved, six months later, to the second floor of the Masonic Building. Gus celebrated his ninetieth birthday this year and still puts in a full week of barbering. Two or three times a day he climbs the stairs in the Masonic Building—and that is no easy task even for youngsters! Gus has a collection of shaving mugs bearing the names of prominent East Greenwich citizens of the last half century. Working mostly by appointment, Gus is an artist at his trade and has generation after generation of East Greenwich men as satisfied customers.

In 1908 Herman Silverman came from Troy, New York, and established a shoe store in half of Isaac Solomon's store



on Main Street. In 1916 the business was moved to the corner of Main and Armory Streets and wearing apparel was added to the stock. Recently the shoe department moved to a new location, just next door to where the business started fifty years ago. Howard Silverman manages the shoe store. Herman Silverman, with other members of his family, continues to run the wearing apparel store.

The Solomons, too, have a family business in the haberdashery line, established by Isaac Solomon in 1894. Isaac was succeeded by his son Benjamin, who in turn was succeeded by his son, Leonard. The latter continues to run the store in the family tradition.

The first garage of size in town was established in 1917 by John Halsband and Joseph Abrams. They called it, situated as it was, the Main Street Garage. Morris and Julius Abrams assumed management and a brick edifice was constructed in 1922. From a small repair shop, the garage grew so that now, after forty years, with more than thirty employees, it is one of the largest Buick distributors in the state. Soon after this time, Edward Kettelle built a big garage on the corner of Main and Friendship Streets. He had the Chrysler franchise until he went out of business in 1955. In the 1930's, East Greenwich Motors, Inc., run by John Maurer and George Congdon, built a modern garage at the corner of Main Street and First Avenue. They were agents for the Ford Motor Company. About a year ago this firm was purchased by Dick Cranston. Numerous other repair shops and gas stations have sprung up along the main thoroughfare.

A new shopping center at Greene and Main Streets was opened with fanfare in 1959. It boasts an Almac market and grocery store, a Woolworth's, Thorpe's Drug Store, Ellen's Children's Shop and a Newport Creamery. These new stores and the parking lot adjoining are on the site of the old Union Mill houses.

The business section has grown mightily since 1837, spreading steadily southward, the only way it could go. The building of the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Bank indicates

that, before long, the main artery, that is Main Street and the Post Road, south to the town line, will soon be utilized entirely for shops and business blocks. This is a far cry from the town where the business district was, for two hundred years, only five or six blocks.

All of this shows growth and progress, of which we are justly proud. New real estate developments seem to mushroom overnight—Lillibridge Plat, Sun Ridge, Fernwood, Sun Valley and Dedford, to name just a few. Laundromats, dress shops, diners and gas stations appear, and sometimes disappear, over night. Once in a while, with the glare of neon lights making our town a replica of hundreds of others, we feel a twinge of pain. Then we hustle up the hill to ease the ache with a glimpse of the Varnum House, the Court House, the Library, the site of the old Academy, and the view of Greenwich Bay, fully realizing that progress is necessary, but glorying in the bits of the past which are still here to preserve our individuality.

#### AMUSEMENT ENTERPRISES IN TOWN

Every town has its places of amusement and East Greenwich is no exception. Early entertainment has been touched on in the chapter "Taverns in the Town", for that was the gathering place and amusement spot for many years. Organized entertainment fell to the lot of the churches; fairs, bazaars, suppers and concerts were usually under the auspices of church groups. Sometimes, individuals like Dr. Daniel Greene, a music lover, sponsored concerts and dances at the taverns. Most of the women, in early days, were content with spinning or quilting parties in their homes. Between 1850 and 1900 the Academy was the focal center for cultural entertainment and some outstanding vocal and instrumental artists, as well as orators, were made available to the public.

When traveling became bearable, speakers and performers came for one night stands and were usually well received. In 1826 the Council records note: "Whereas Isaac Chidsey of New Haven hath made appreciation to the Council, for liberty to exhibit within said East Greenwich his Jubilee Show of 100 living rattlesnakes". In 1881 Bowen R. Church,

an outstanding cornetist who was born here, returned to give a concert. In 1886 Frances Willard of W.C.T.U. fame, spoke here in town. By this time, local aspirants were making their way in the magic world of entertainment. In 1898 Josephine Hall, daughter of Albert and Maria Hall, played the lead at the Providence Opera House in "The Girl from Paris". She went on to star in Charles Frohman's "Oh, Susannah" and, in 1900, made a successful European tour. Lucy Allen, another local girl, in 1902 was soloist with the band of John Philip Souza. Thus our girls came a long way from the quilting bee!

On the less lofty side at that period, seventy-five men were arrested seeking their own entertainment at a local cock-fight. As early as 1878, the steamer "Canonicus" was making excursion trips from East Greenwich to Newport, providing new, family-type entertainment and amusement.

The year of 1909 saw the advent of the first movie theatre in town, when P. J. McCahey opened the Star Theatre, near where the Big Star Market now stands. High class entertainment was advertised, including pictures of the Hudson River Celebration and the Pittsburgh-Detroit world championship baseball game. Reserved seats were fifteen cents, and regular seats were ten cents. In 1917 the Star Theatre was showing the silent movie version of "Snow White", starring Marguerite Clarke and featuring a local boy, "Blue" Rice, as one of the seven dwarfs. All seats were then twelve cents. Joe Gorman was the owner of the theatre at that time.

Band concerts were a favorite pastime and, in 1918, Salvatore (Sam) Baldino was giving concerts on the Academy campus with his East Greenwich Columbus Italian Band. Band concerts have long been a nostalgic dream until a year or so ago, when the Kentish Guards Band resurrected that happy pastime, giving excellent free concerts on the steps of the Eldredge School.

In 1925 the S.W.K. Allen property, across from the Town Hall was transferred to the Community Theatres, Inc. The Allen homestead was first moved and, more recently, was torn down. Local men formed this corporation and built the

Greenwich Theatre, which had its opening in May, 1926. It has been in continuous operation ever since, although it has changed hands several times. The first sound movie in town was shown at this theatre in May, 1933.

The building built for the U. S. O. activities during the war was taken over and remodeled by the Erinakes brothers. It was named the Kent Theatre and showed its first movie in 1947. Both the Greenwich and the Kent show movies daily.

In the western part of the town, progress was being made, too. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lewis donated one half acre of land to the Frenchtown Community Club, so that they could build a community house. This has been the scene of much activity, in the line of entertainment, ever since. One of the big events of the year is their annual clambake, put on by that excellent bakemaster, Arthur Briggs.

In that same area we have the Rocky Hill Fair, which started out in 1946 as a Grange fair. It developed so rapidly that it outgrew the Grange and was on its way to oblivion when several agriculturists including Elmer Benson, Michael De Ciantis, Warren Moorehead, Richard Hamilton, and Salvatore Bambini, rescued it and formed a non-business corporation devoted to promoting agriculture and its allied interests. From a few sheds and stalls at Barton's Corner, the fair has become the outstanding agricultural event in Rhode Island. Each August, exhibitors come from all over New England and thousands of square feet are utilized to show livestock and other exhibits relating to country living and associated industries. A move is afoot to have it made the State Fair, and it well deserves the support of all Rhode Islanders.

Outdoor amusements, such as baseball and football, have had their day here, and East Greenwich teams have had loyal support from local rooters. An active Little League group is currently being sponsored by local merchants and organizations. The East Greenwich Yacht Club is, of course, a private club, but its regattas have offered fine entertainment—free for the looking—to residents of the town. Organized in 1909, the Yacht Club has a building and docks on the shore be-



tween Division and King Streets. Yachtsmen from all over the world have known the security of anchoring in Greenwich Cove.

Many local organizations have played their part in providing social and civic entertainment in town. The American Legion is one of the most active and civic-minded groups in Greenwich. Formed just after World War I, the unselfishness of its members in promoting and helping finance school projects, baseball leagues, blood banks and many other local undertakings have made them outstanding. Since World War II the Veterans of Foreign Wars have also been active in civic affairs.

The Red Cross, too, takes its place in the town, not to provide amusement, but to lend assistance in time of need. Their well-organized assistance during the hurricanes in 1938 and the 1940's will long be remembered and appreciated. The East Greenwich Ambulance Association, the recently organized Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Lion's Club are all admirable civic groups.

Other organizations such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the 4 H Club and local church groups have long been a part of the town life and have helped to direct the youth of this area to better amusements and more useful living.

Cultural groups in music, art, and drama have come and gone through the years. At present the Clef Society is an active musical club, with a fine choral group associated with it. Lately, the Academy Players, a group of young thespians, have added their efforts to bring the arts to East Greenwich. Within the last year or two the East Greenwich Art Club has been organized. Amateur artists have thrown themselves into this project with great enthusiasm and many fine exhibitions have served to stimulate interest among people of all ages and various walks of life.

The advent of television, for a while detracted from organized amusements and commercial enterprises in that vein; but time has ironed out the difficulty to a great degree and the need for community entertainment and active participation in town projects is coming into its own once again.



NATHANAEL GREENE BIRTHPLACE AT POTOWOMUT — 1684

## CHAPTER XXII

### *Some Old Families and Their Genealogy*

There are many families in East Greenwich who are of the tenth or eleventh generation to live in this area. A few of them can trace their ancestry back to members of the original forty-eight grantees who settled the town in 1677. Others came later but were outstanding, either locally in civic matters or nationally in military and political affairs. Possibly the best known family in Kent County are the Greenes who have behind them three hundred years of family tradition.

#### THE GREENES OF POTOWOMUT

To try to write of the Greenes in this area is a gigantic task, with material enough to fill an entire volume. They have been leading citizens hereabout for so many years that it is an impossibility to record all their contributions to Rhode Island history. They married into almost every well-known

family in the state, and Greene descendants are legion, from Maine to California.

It all began with John<sup>1</sup> Green of Salisbury, England, better known as Surgeon John. He was, in truth, a surgeon. He came to America in 1635. He was thirty-eight years old at that time and was married to Joan Tattersall. He went to Salem, where he was friendly with Roger Williams and came to join him in Providence in 1637. He settled, in 1644, in the part of Warwick now called Spring Green.

In 1654 the town of Warwick purchased from the Indians a tract called Potowomut. James<sup>2</sup> Greene, son of Surgeon John, was the first settler there. In 1684 he built a house near the forge which was his livelihood. He had six sons; James, Benjamin, Jabez, Nathanael, John, and Rufus. All of these were employed at the forge; even James<sup>3</sup>, who was a doctor by profession, had an interest in the business. They also operated a sawmill and gristmill to complete their little industrial center at Potowomut. At his death in 1698, James<sup>2</sup> Greene left the home to Jabez<sup>3</sup>. Born in 1673, he was instrumental in building up the ironmongers trade to a successful industry.

Nathanael<sup>4</sup>, son of Jabez<sup>3</sup> Green, inherited the family mansion at Potowomut. He was born in 1707 and became a much respected citizen of the community. He was a Quaker preacher and held strong convictions on the subject of religion. His son, Nathanael<sup>5</sup>, was born at Potowomut in 1742 and was destined to become nationally famous. He was a Quaker, too, until he was "read out of meeting" for marching in a military parade, just prior to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. Nathanael<sup>5</sup> became a brigadier general, second in command to General Washington in the war for liberty. Time and the studies of historians and military strategists have proved him to be one of the greatest military leaders of all times.

In 1774 he married Catharine Littlefield. They had two sons and three daughters. As a youth, their son, George Washington<sup>6</sup> Greene, was drowned near their plantation on the Savannah River in Georgia. Their daughter, Martha<sup>6</sup>

Greene, married John C. Nightingale and later married Dr. Henry E. Turner. Cornelia<sup>6</sup> Greene married Peyton Skipworth and later Edward B. Littlefield. Louise<sup>6</sup> Greene married a Mr. Shaw. The only son of General Greene to grow to manhood was Nathanael. He married Anna, daughter of Ethan Clarke of East Greenwich.

Nathanael<sup>6</sup> and Anna Clarke Greene had two sons, once again bearing the surnames George Washington and Nathanael. George<sup>7</sup> W. Greene was born in 1811 and was a scholar, author, and diplomat. He served as United States consul to Italy from 1837 to 1845 and there met his famous friend, Henry W. Longfellow. Dr. Greene taught modern languages at Brown and later lectured in American history at Cornell University. He was the author of several history books as well as a three volume life of General Nathanael Greene. Dr. Greene's brother, Nathanael<sup>7</sup> Greene, became a physician. Although both brothers married, neither of them had any children. Martha<sup>6</sup> and Cornelia<sup>6</sup>, daughters of General Greene, both had families. Their descendants are the only lineal descendants of General Nathanael Greene.

The present owner of the Greene homestead at Potowomut is Thomas Casey<sup>8</sup> Greene, whose great-grandfather, Christopher<sup>5</sup> Greene, was the brother of the famous general. Thus the house, built so long ago by Surgeon John's son, James, is still in possession of the Greene family of Potowomut.

The first member of the Greene family to attain honor at state level was William<sup>4</sup> Greene (Samuel<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>), who served as colonial Governor of Rhode Island for eleven years between 1743 and 1758. He was born in 1695, the fourth generation from Surgeon John and inherited from his father the Greene Farm on Division Street. He married his second cousin, Catharine Greene. They had four sons, one of whom was William<sup>5</sup>, born in 1731. He became governor of Rhode Island in 1778, remaining in office until 1785. He was a strong and sincere worker for liberty, serving as a member of the Council of War. He married Catharine Ray and their grandson, William<sup>7</sup> Greene, born in 1797, became Deputy Governor of the state.



Many other members of the Greene family of Potowomut have held public office and served most admirably. This family producing a brigadier-general, two governors and a deputy-governor have had much to do with the making of history in our state and country.

#### THE FRY FAMILY

This family can trace its beginnings right along with the founding of East Greenwich. The first Thomas Fry, who was the patriarch of the Rhode Island branch of the family, was born in Devonshire, England, in 1632. He was the son of John Fry, who was a member of Parliament and, it is said, was one of the judges involved in the sentencing to death of King Charles I.

Thomas<sup>1</sup> Fry was in Newport, Rhode Island, as early as 1669. He was married to Mary Griffin. He was granted his share of the 5000 acres in East Greenwich in 1677 and, in 1689, deeded the grant to his son, Thomas. Thomas<sup>2</sup> Fry was born in 1666. In 1688 he married Welthian Greene. He was a glazier by trade and lived here from 1689 until his death in 1748. He served as Justice of the Peace, Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly, and Deputy Governor from 1727-1729.

Thomas<sup>2</sup> and Welthian Fry had a son, Thomas<sup>3</sup>, born in East Greenwich in 1691. His first wife was Mary Greene, whom he married in 1719. His second wife was Eleanor Greene, whom he married in 1740. He had eleven children by his first wife and two by the second. The five sons of Thomas<sup>3</sup> Fry were:

Thomas, b. 1723, married 1) Mary Mawney, 2) Penelope Rhodes.

John, b. 1728, married Mercy Tillinghast.

Samuel, b. 1729, married 1) Luciana Coggeshall, 2) Deborah Greene.

Joseph, b. 1736, married Eleanor Greene

Richard, b. 1743, married Sarah Arnold

Thomas<sup>3</sup> Fry also had another brother, John<sup>3</sup> Fry, born in 1695. He was Deputy from 1742 to 1744 and from 1752 to 1753. He was chosen a trustee by the Indian Sachems. He was also a judge of the Court of Common Pleas.

The fourth generation of Frys in Rhode Island were men of leadership and civic responsibility. John<sup>4</sup> Fry, son of Thomas<sup>3</sup>, was a captain in the First Company of the First Regiment of Kent County and also served as Justice of the Court of Common Pleas from 1746 to 1752. Samuel<sup>4</sup> Fry was a sea captain of the sloop "Humbird" which made frequent voyages to the West Indies. His grave stone reads:

"Captain Samuel Fry, who departed this life on the 5th of December of 1792 in the 64th year of his Age. In 1765 he was seized with a Fever in Surinam which terminated in a total loss of sight which he bore with manly fortitude upward of 27 years, often explaining: it is good for me that I am afflicted."

Still another brother, Joseph<sup>4</sup> Fry was a major in the Kentish Guards, serving in the Revolutionary War from 1775 to 1776. The youngest son of Thomas<sup>3</sup> Fry was Richard Fry, who was a colonel in the Kentish Guards during the Revolutionary War and also served as recruiting officer for East Greenwich. He later was appointed Sheriff of Kent County.

Captain Samuel<sup>4</sup> Fry had eleven children, one of which was Lieutenant Joseph<sup>5</sup> Fry, born in 1774. Joseph was apprenticed to a printer in Providence. From 1789 to 1790 he was a justice of the Court of Common Pleas. From 1793 to 1796 he was a lieutenant in the Second Regiment of Kent County. In 1796 he published the *R. I. Gazette* and, that same year, moved to Albany, New York, where he published the *Albany Chronicle* and compiled the first directory ever published there.

Joseph<sup>5</sup> Fry had a son, Samuel<sup>6</sup>, born in 1798, who married and went to live in Florida. His son, Captain Joseph<sup>7</sup> Fry, was born in Tampa in 1826. He went to live with his grandparents in Albany, New York in 1834. He was ap-

prenticed to work for an uncle in the hardware business but did not care for the work. He went to Washington, D. C., and saw President Tyler, who invited him to dine. He so impressed the President that he granted him a midshipman's warrant in 1841. Joseph graduated from Annapolis and participated in the Mexican War. He served in the Confederate Navy during the Civil War. In 1873 he sailed as commander of the "Virginius" from Kingston, Jamaica, to Port Limon, Costa Rica. Captain Fry and his crew were overtaken by the man-o-war "Tornado", taken prisoner by the Spaniards and all of them, including Captain Fry, were shot as pirates.

The present generation of this old family, living on South County Trail on the site of the original grant to Thomas Fry, is represented by Louis<sup>8</sup> Fry (William<sup>7</sup>, Joseph<sup>6</sup>, Thomas<sup>5</sup>, Joseph<sup>4</sup>, Thomas<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Thomas<sup>1</sup>). Eight generations of Frys (soldiers, sailors, traders, and judges, along with a publisher and a pirate) are included in their roster. As old East Greenwich family, the Frys are the stuff of which America is made.

#### THE CASEY FAMILY

Another illustrious old family of this town were the Caseys. The progenitor of this family was Thomas Casey of Newport, who was in that city as early as 1658. He was born in Ireland, about 1637, and died in 1711. He married Sarah (?) and they had three sons: Thomas<sup>2</sup>, born in 1672; Adam<sup>2</sup>, born in 1675; and Samuel<sup>2</sup>, born in 1686. Thomas<sup>2</sup> settled in Newport. Samuel<sup>2</sup> settled in North Kingstown. But it is Adam<sup>2</sup> with whom we are concerned, because he settled in this area in 1709. He married Mary Greenman and had three sons. He died in Coventry in 1765.

Adam Casey's son, Thomas<sup>3</sup>, was born in Newport in 1706. His early life was spent in Warwick. In 1728 he married Comfort Langford of East Greenwich. He was made freeman here in 1730. He was a member of the Committee of War during the French and Indian War and supervised recruiting here. He kept a dry-goods store and also engaged in shipping and fisheries. He died in East Greenwich in 1797.

Thomas and Comfort Casey had only one son, Silas<sup>4</sup>, born at East Greenwich in 1734. He married Abigail Coggeshall in 1759. Like his father he was a successful merchant engaged in fisheries and shipping until hit by the Embargo Act, when his fortunes were greatly diminished. In 1760 he bought from Othniel Gorton, a house on the Warwick side of Division Street and Post Road. In 1783 he formed the Company of Casey, Son and Greene, composed of himself, his son, Wanton, and Charles Greene. The company was dissolved in 1867. Silas Casey lived on Boston Neck Road in North Kingstown for a few years, then returned to East Greenwich, where he died in 1814.

Wanton<sup>5</sup> Casey was born in East Greenwich in 1760. In 1774, when only fourteen years old, he was one of the incorporators of the Kentish Guards. He served with this company in the Revolutionary War until 1779, when he was sent by his father to Nantes, France, to study the mercantile business at the home of Jonathan Williams, agent of the Colonies in France. In 1788 Wanton bought two shares of the Ohio Company and spent some time in Marietta, where he met and married Elizabeth Goodale in 1789. He returned to Rhode Island and lived in North Kingstown until 1797, when he went into business in Greenwich. He built a house on the corner of Main and Division Streets in 1808, on a lot which his father had purchased from John Peirce in 1763. This house was moved to Spencer Avenue in May, 1880, and is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Hanson. Wanton<sup>5</sup> Casey had ten children, four girls and six boys. One boy died in infancy. Thomas<sup>6</sup> settled in New York, John Wanton<sup>6</sup> in Illinois, William Lincoln<sup>6</sup> in Columbus, Ohio, and Silas<sup>6</sup>, born in 1807, stayed in East Greenwich.

Silas<sup>6</sup> Casey entered West Point in 1822 at the age of fifteen, and graduated in 1826. He was appointed a lieutenant in the Seventh Infantry, serving in the Indian wars on the Western frontier, in the war with the Seminoles in Florida, and in the Mexican and Civil Wars. He was wounded at Fair Oaks, Virginia, and was twice brevetted for gallantry in battles in Mexico. He wrote a book, widely used and ac-



claimed in military circles, called "Casey's Military Tactics". He retired as a Major General. He married Abbie Pearce. They had nine children, three daughters and six sons. Three sons died young; of the others Thomas Lincoln<sup>7</sup> and Silas<sup>7</sup> were outstanding.

Thomas Lincoln Casey was born in 1831. He graduated from West Point in 1852 as first man in his class. He was appointed a lieutenant in the Engineers and, by 1888, had risen to be Chief of Engineers with the rank of Brigadier General. He served in the Civil War and, afterward, had charge of the Division of Fortifications in Washington, D. C. He was called upon to complete the building of the Washington Monument in 1880. This project had bogged down badly, and General Casey was called upon to straighten things out. He also completed buildings for the Department of State, of War, and of the Navy and was designated by Congress in 1888 to construct the building for the Library of Congress. He was awarded the Legion of Honor of France by President Carnot in 1890.

In 1856 General Casey married Emma Weir. They had four sons. Thomas Lincoln<sup>8</sup> was born in 1857, graduated from West Point in 1879, and was Captain in the Engineering Corps. Robert<sup>8</sup> died young. Harry Weir<sup>8</sup>, when only a young man, was drowned at Narragansett Pier. Edward Pearce<sup>8</sup> Casey, born in 1864, graduated with highest honors from Columbia School of Mines and succeeded his father as supervisory architect in the construction of the Library of Congress. He designed many monuments in Washington, including Grant's Monument and Commodore Barry's Monument, as well as the Continental Memorial Hall of the D. A. R. and the Connecticut Avenue Bridge over the Potomac. The New York State Monument at Gettysburg also was designed by Edward Pearce Casey.

To go back a bit, there is another member of the family worthy of note. This was Silas<sup>7</sup>, son of Silas<sup>6</sup> Casey, who was born in Greenwich in 1841. He was graduated from Annapolis in 1860 and rose to the rank of Captain by 1889. He served

during the entire War of Rebellion. He was an instructor in seamanship at Annapolis and was executive officer of the "Colorado", flagship of the Asiatic squadron, 1870 to 1873.

So these were the Caseys, illustrious men indeed, who had their start here in East Greenwich. Today the name of Casey has all but disappeared from the town. In fact, Thomas Casey Greene is the only descendant in these parts carrying on the name.

### THE TARBOX FAMILY

Representative of the families in the Frenchtown section of East Greenwich is the Tarbox family. They have deep roots in the town. John Tarbox, the first Tarbox to settle in New England, came from Lancashire, England, to Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1639. His son, John<sup>2</sup>, was born in 1645. He married Mary Haven; their son, John<sup>3</sup>, was born at Lynn in 1668. This third generation John might well be called the father of the East Greenwich branch of the Tarbox family, as he married and settled in Frenchtown, on Moosehorn Road, in 1695. When he died he left his estate and belongings to his eight children. Among his possessions were three casks, a beetle and wedge, three pots, hook and trammels, one jug, and a barrel of cider.

John<sup>4</sup> Tarbox was born in Frenchtown in 1698. He was twice married, first to Audry Briggs and later to Margaret Shippee. This John enlisted in the French and Indian War, as a ship's carpenter. He was taken captive at Oswego, N. Y. in 1756 and was held, first at Quebec, and then in England. He was finally released, and died off the coast of Africa in 1759. He had a sister, Jemima, who married John Briggs. It was John, son of John and Jemima (Tarbox) Briggs, who, with his cousin, Peleg Briggs, left this area to follow the religious leader, Jemima Wilkinson, to New York state.

John<sup>4</sup> Tarbox had a son, Samuel<sup>5</sup>, who was born in Frenchtown in 1735. He was a cooper by trade and served in the Revolutionary War. He married Lois Matteson in 1762. Their son, John<sup>6</sup> Tarbox, was born here in 1764. He, too,

was a cooper and lived all his life in Frenchtown. Another son of Samuel<sup>5</sup> Tarbox was Joseph<sup>6</sup>, born in 1766. He married Esther Whitford. Their son, Matteson<sup>7</sup>, was born here in 1791. Matteson married Abigail Straight. Their son, Joseph<sup>8</sup>, was born in 1818. Joseph married Phebe Bailey. He was the first in the family to operate the granite quarry, just over the line in West Greenwich. This quarry yielded a fine, light granite used in the construction of many buildings in this area.

Joseph<sup>8</sup> and Phebe Tarbox had twin sons, Daniel<sup>9</sup> and William<sup>9</sup>, born in Frenchtown in 1841. These two members of the Tarbox clan lived to a ripe old age and are remembered by many oldsters here. William made a life-long study of the cultivation of flowers, especially dahlias. He imported rare varieties from abroad. Visitors came from all over the country to see the flowers in bloom and to chat with "The Dahlia King". The other twin, Daniel, was a stonemason, but did not work at the quarry. Joseph<sup>9</sup>, another brother, ran the family quarry. Daniel<sup>9</sup> Tarbox married Mary Louise Clark. They had two sons, Jesse<sup>10</sup>, born in 1874 and died in 1940, and Clarence<sup>10</sup>, born in 1884 and died in 1933. Jesse, for many years, ran the old Shippeetown gristmill, now the property of Raymond Crothers. There he ground the finest jonny cake meal between huge granite stones, selected with care from the nearby quarry.

Still living (and over ninety) is Fones<sup>9</sup> Tarbox (David<sup>8</sup>, Fones<sup>7</sup>, Joseph<sup>6</sup>, Samuel<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>) ninth generation in descent from the family patriarch. Two of his children, Edith and Harold<sup>10</sup> Tarbox are residents of Rhode Island. Mrs. Florence G. Tibbitts, a native of East Greenwich, is also descended from the Tarbox family, as are a number of others still living in town.

Until a few years ago, the little old cottage built by John<sup>3</sup> Tarbox in 1695 stood on Moosehorn Road. It was most recently owned by the Rochford family. But it burned one night and is no more. Thus the family of Tarbox have spent many generations within the confines of East Greenwich. They are representative of the sturdy, pioneer-type family that made

up Frenchtown, be their name Briggs, Vaughn, Kettelle, Tibbits, Bailey, Spencer, Shippee—or Tarbox.

### THE BARTON FAMILY

Strictly speaking, the Bartons are a Warwick family. Like the Potowomut families, their history ties in so closely with that of this town that they deserve to be included in this chapter.

The first Barton in Rhode Island was Rufus, a Quaker, who came from New York to Portsmouth about 1640, having fled from persecution by the Dutch. He was one of the early settlers of Warwick and records show that he was Councilman there in 1647. He was granted land, part of the Cowesett Purchase, which included land at Barton's Corner, where Division Street crosses South County Trail.

Rufus<sup>1</sup> Barton had three children, two girls and one boy. Benjamin, who married Susannah, daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth Gorton. Rufus<sup>1</sup> Barton died in 1648 so Benjamin<sup>2</sup> was the actual progenitor of the Warwick-East Greenwich family. Richard Barton of East Greenwich is ninth generation in descent from Rufus<sup>1</sup> Barton.

Down through the years the name of Barton pops up in almost every Rhode Island genealogy. Family names connected with the Bartons include: Holden, Wightman, Greene, Slocum, Carr, Wickes and Robinson. The Bartons were solid citizens, farm people for the most part and Quakers by religion. All branches of the family did not cling to the Quaker persuasion however. Both Rufus and Benjamin Barton served in the Revolutionary War.

The present Barton house at Barton's Corner was built in 1836 by Rufus<sup>7</sup> Barton near the site of the first homestead, built much earlier. The last members of the family to live in the homestead were the Misses Sarah, Hannah and Jane Barton, who were successful school teachers in the Warwick-Rocky Hill area. The property recently passed from the possession of the Bartons after being their home-place for over three hundred years.



## THE TILLINGHAST FAMILY

The patriarch of the Tillinghasts of East Greenwich was the eminent Elder Pardon<sup>1</sup> Tillinghast who arrived in Providence in 1645. A man of strong religious convictions, he was a follower of Roger Williams. The latter had established the first Baptist Church in America, in Providence in 1638. Elder Pardon served as minister of the First Baptist Church for forty years and, in 1711, deeded his home to the church to be used as a meeting house. He was married to Lydia Taber. They had ten children, four boys and six girls. Their eldest son, Pardon<sup>2</sup>, was the first Tillinghast to live in East Greenwich.

Pardon<sup>2</sup> Tillinghast was born in Providence in 1668. He married Mary Keech about 1690. They had three sons and two daughters. In 1699 he purchased from David and Margaret Shippee seventy acres, a house, and an orchard in Frenchtown. For these he paid 107 pounds, 10 shillings, two houses, and an orchard in Providence. He was made a freeman of East Greenwich in 1699. For many years he served as justice of the peace. He died here in 1743.

Philip<sup>3</sup>, son of Pardon<sup>2</sup> and Mary Tillinghast, was born here in 1707. He married Alice Thomas. Their son, Thomas<sup>4</sup>, became a prominent citizen of the town. He was born in Frenchtown in 1742. In 1762 he married Mary, daughter of Thomas Hill of North Kingstown. He was a judge of the Court of Common Pleas, a justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court in 1780, and associate justice until 1803. He was a colonel in the R. I. Militia, a Kentish Guardsman, during the Revolutionary War. He died in East Greenwich in 1821.

The 1716 plat of East Greenwich shows that the Tillinghast land ran from Frenchtown Road south to the property of John Manchester, whose land ran to the Exeter line. Pardon<sup>2</sup> Tillinghast had 102 acres, bound easterly by the South County Trail, northerly by Frenchtown Road and a small plot belonging to Tom Matteson, and westerly by the land of George Golden and Peter Mony, or Mawney. The

homestead, with burial ground beyond, was near the site of the present Briarbrook Farm. The early town records called the Tillinghast home and property "The Mansion Estate".

Thomas<sup>5</sup>, son of Thomas<sup>4</sup> and Mary Tillinghast, was born here in 1772. Like his forbears, he was a man of considerable, and varied, abilities. He married Lucy, daughter of Samuel Allen of North Kingstown. Thomas<sup>5</sup> was an earnest Baptist and served as pastor of the Seminary Baptist Church in Frenchtown. He also studied medicine with Dr. Peter Turner and so was able to minister to both soul and body. Dr. Thomas, with his three brothers, Allen, Joseph, and Pardon, owned and operated the Tillinghast Factory, the first cotton mill in town.

Another descendant of old Pardon<sup>1</sup> was "Molasses" Pardon<sup>4</sup> Tillinghast (John<sup>3</sup>, Philip<sup>2</sup>, Pardon<sup>1</sup>). His nickname was given him because he imported goods, including large barrels of "molasses". But what the barrels really contained (said local gossip) was rum or little colored boys. Coming from a rather strait-laced family, "Molasses" Pardon stuck firmly to his assertion as to the contents of the barrels. Maybe it *was* molasses!

In the same generation with "Molasses" Pardon was a much more illustrious member of the clan. He was Charles<sup>4</sup> Tillinghast (John<sup>3</sup>, Pardon<sup>2</sup>, Pardon<sup>1</sup>), who lived at Quidnessett Neck. In 1775 Charles was appointed enlisting officer by the General Assembly of Rhode Island and became so active in his work that his life was threatened by the Tories. Although he had a family, he continued his dangerous work just as zealously. In November, 1775 he sent his twenty-four year old son, John, on horseback to the gristmill. On the trip John was put upon by the Tories and so badly handled that he died of the rough treatment. Later that same month, the Tories entered the home of Charles in the night and, while his wife cradled a six months old babe in her arms, held a pistol to her head. They yanked Charles from his bed and drove him, naked, to the beach where he was put in a boat, and taken to Block Island. There, seventeen days later, he died from ex-

posure. Unsung heroes indeed are John and Charles Tillinghast—men of conviction and true sons of liberty.

The name of Tillinghast is still common here and old-timers slur the name so that it sounds like "Tinglast". In East Greenwich today is Mrs. Emmelyn Lincoln, eighth generation in descent from old Pardon<sup>1</sup> Tillinghast; Mrs. Clara Harrington, ninth generation in descent, and Lester Tillinghast, tenth generation in descent from Elder Pardon of Providence.

Of course, like all old families, the various descendants have scattered all over the country. But the Rhode Island branch, and many other branches, all stem from the first Elder Pardon and from our own patriarch, Pardon<sup>2</sup> Tillinghast of Frenchtown.

In addition to these families there were others who were here in East Greenwich before 1730 and figured prominently in the formation of the town. To help tyros in genealogy and to give credit where it is due there follows a list of such men with available facts, names of their children and other pertinent material:

*Bailey, Hugh*, b. ?, d. 1724, married 1) Anna?, 2) Abigail Williams. He came here from Newport between 1696 and 1702.

Children, all by his first wife:

William, b. 1696, married Rebecca Straight  
Samuel, b. 1703,  
Joseph, b. 1705, married Elizabeth Spencer  
Hannah, b. 1708  
Sarah, b. 1710  
John, b. 1712, married Anne?  
Jeremiah, b. 1714  
Anna, b. 1717

*Barton, Benjamin*, b. 1645, d. 1720, married Susannah Gorton. He lived practically on the East Greenwich-Warwick line and his descendants have been active in this community.

### Children:

Rufus, b. 1673, married Sarah Robinson  
Andrew, b. ?, married Rebecca Low  
Mary, b. 1678, married Jabez Greene  
Phebe, b. ?, married Henry Tucker  
Naomi, b. ?, married 1) Ebenezer Slocum, 2) Edward Carr.

*Brayton, Thomas*, son of Francis and Mary (Fish) Brayton, married Mary Freeborn. Came from Portsmouth to East Greenwich in 1725 and lived where Raymond Crothers now lives in Frenchtown.

### Children:

Mary, b. 1708, married ? Gifford  
Hannah, b. 1711, married John Straight  
Thomas, b. 1713, married Mary Phillips  
Francis, b. 1715, married 1) Sarah Phillips, 2) Martha Levalley  
Gideon, b. 1718, married Rebecca ?  
Francis, b. 1721.

*Briggs, Daniel*, b. ?, d. 1730, married Lydia ?. Came from Prudence Island. Was in East Greenwich in 1702, when he bought land from Joseph Waite.

### Children:

Benjamin, married Susanna Spencer  
Hannah, married Joseph Gardiner  
Martha, married Samuel Spencer  
Deliverance, married Seth Jones  
Mercy, married William Card.

*Briggs, Thomas*, b. ?, d. 1736, married Martha ?. Came from Kings Town to East Greenwich in 1703.

### Children:

Ann, married Samuel Gardiner.

*Briggs, Richard*, b. 1675, d. 1733. Married 1) Susannah Spencer, 2) Experience ?. He lived on South Road where Boesch family now live. Daniel, Thomas and Richard Briggs were all sons of John and Francis Briggs.



Children: By first wife:

Richard, b. 1701, married Mary Shippee  
Francis, b. 1703, married Mercy Matteson  
Audrey, b. 1705, married John Tarbox  
Susanna, b. 1707, married Thomas Matteson  
John, b. 1709, married Jemima Tarbox  
Sarah, b. 1710, married John Aylesworth  
Caleb, b. 1713, married Elizabeth Tarbox  
Ann, b. 1715, married Fearnot King

By second wife:

Mary, b. 1726, married Thomas Place, Jr.  
Philip, b. 1728  
Daniel, b. 1730, married Elizabeth Spencer  
Alice, b. 1732.

*Coggeshall, Joshua*, b. 1681, d. 1727. In 1703 he married 1) Mary (or Mercy), daughter of Thomas Nichols. He married 2) Deborah Reynolds. He came to East Greenwich from Newport in 1704.

Children, by first wife:

Sarah, b. 1704, married Samuel Greene  
Hannah, b. 1709, married Joseph Nichols  
Joshua, b. 1711, married Deborah ?  
Mary, b. 1716  
Mercy, b. 1719, married John Spencer  
Thomas, b. 1719, twin of Mercy.

By second wife:

Hannah, b. 1727, married John Whitman.

*Grinnell, Matthew*, b. ?, d. ?. Married ?. He was a maltster by trade and was here about 1696.

Children:

Daniel, married Sarah Chase  
Matthew, married Mary Nichols  
Thomas, unmarried  
Elizabeth, married John Carpenter

*Johnson, Elisha*, b. ?, d. 1738, married Deborah Sherman. He came here from Newport and was made freeman in East

Greenwich in 1715. He lived on South County Trail, near where Frenchtown Community House is today.

Children:

Elisha

Isaac, married 1) Martha Johnson, 2) Audrey Spencer

Jonathan, married Bathsheba Allen

Benjamin

Elijah, married Ruth Casey

Elizabeth, married Clement Cooper

Deborah, married Jonathan Yeats

Jemima

Amey

Freelove

Phebe.

*Langford, Thomas*, b. ?, d. 1709, married 1) Comfort ?, 2) Sarah ? Lived on Division Street on Warwick-East Greenwich line and owned land in East Greenwich in 1698.

Children: By first wife:

Thomas, b. 1695, married Hannah ?

Ruth, b. 1702, married Thomas Nichols

Comfort, b. 1704, married Thomas Casey

John, b. 1705, married Barbara Rice

Jonathan, b. 1708, married Ann Clapp (or Clarke).

*Matteson, Henry*, b. 1646, d. 1690, married Hannah Parsons. With permission of General Assembly, he took over the 100 acres that had been granted to John Pearce and came here in 1678.

Children:

Henry, married Judith Weaver

Thomas, married Martha Shippee

Joseph, married 1) Rachel ?, 2) Martha ?

Francis, married Sarah Nichols

Hannah.

*Mawney, Peter*, son of Moses LeMoine. one of the Huguenot settlers. They Anglicized their name to Mawney. Peter married 1) Mary Tillinghast, 2) Mercy Tillinghast. Their

land was on South County Trail where Scott Sherman lived and near where Mathers live now.

Children: By first wife:

Elizabeth, married James Tillinghast  
Mercy, married Thomas Fry  
Lydia, married Dr. Ephriam Bowen  
Mary, married James Angell  
John, married Amey Gibbs

By his second wife, Mercy:

Pardon, b. 1733, lost at sea  
Sarah, married Joseph Whipple  
Amey, married a Dr. Carroll.

*Nichols, Thomas.* married Hannah Griffin. One of original settlers.

Children:

Thomas, b. 1660, married Mercy Reynolds  
Susannah, b. 1662  
John, b. 1666, married 1) Hannah Forman 2) Rebecca Andrews  
Robert, b. 1671, married Mary Case  
Hannah, b. 1674, married William Arnold  
Benjamin, b. 1676, married Mary ?  
Jonathan, b. 1681, married Elizabeth Lawton  
Joseph, b. 1684  
Elizabeth, b. 1688, married Gideon Freeborn.

*Peirce, Giles,* married Elizabeth Hall. Original settler.

Children:

Jeremiah, b. 1678, married Abigail Long  
Susanna, b. 1679, married John Warner  
Elizabeth, b. 1682, married Thomas Spencer  
John, b. 1687, married Susanna Nichols  
Mary, b. 1690, married David Vaughn.

*Shippee, David,* b. ?, d. 1718. Married Margaret Scranton. Came to East Greenwich from Warwick in 1682 when he bought a house and land from Henry and Hannah Matteson.

Children:

Elizabeth, married James Cooper  
Martha, married Thomas Matteson

Mary, married John Rutenburg  
Samuel, married Ann Leithfield  
David, married Hannah ?  
Thomas, married Sarah Place  
Solomon, married Elizabeth ?.

*Spencer, John*, married Susannah Griffin. One of original grantees.

Children:

John, b. 1666, married Audrey Greene  
Michael, b. 1668, married Elizabeth  
Benjamin, b. 1670, married 1) Martha ? 2) Patience Hawkins  
William, b. 1672, married 1) Elizabeth ? 2) Elizabeth, widow of  
Thomas Arnold.  
Robert, b. 1674, married 1) Theodosia Whaley. 2) Susannah  
Reynolds, 3) Martha Hopkins.  
Abner, b. 1676, married Susannah Wells  
Thomas, b. 1679, married 1) Elizabeth Pearce, 2) Elizabeth ?,  
3) Sarah Howland  
Susanna, b. 1681, married Richard Briggs  
Peleg, b. 1683, married Elizabeth Coggeshall.

*Straight, Henry*, b. 1652, d. 1728, married Mary Long. He came here from Portsmouth. taking over Henry Brightman's grant in 1679.

Children:

Henry, b. ?, married Hannah ?  
John, b. 1678, married 1) Rose Smith, 2) Elizabeth ?.

*Tibbitts, Henry*, married Sarah Stanton. Came here from Kings Town between 1690 and 1708. Lived on Frenchtown Road.

Children:

Henry, married Rebecca Medbury  
Ann, married Samuel Fones  
George, married 1) Mary ?, 2) Alice Sherman, 3) Sarah Bliven  
John, married Elizabeth Hall  
Mary, married Edward Green  
Sarah, married William Hall  
Martha, married Benjamin Stanton  
———, married William Tanner.



*Vaughn, George*, married Margaret Spink. He was one of original settlers and lived on Middle Road, west of South County Trail.

Children:

George, married Jane Nichols  
David, married Mary Pearce  
Mary  
Christopher, married Deborah Nichols  
Abigail, married John Hall  
Robert, married Joanna Sweet.

*Weaver, Clement*, married 1) ?, 2) Rachel Andrew.

Children:

Clement, b. 1669, married Hannah Long  
William, b. 16—, married Elizabeth Harris  
Judith, b. ?, married Henry Matteson  
Joseph, b. 1679, married Elizabeth Sweet  
Benjamin, b. ?, married Mercy ?.

*Whitford, Pasco*, married Mary Stanton. He was in Newport in 1640 and came here about 1689.

Children:

Nicholas, married Mary Carr  
Pasco, married Mary Stafford.

These are the very early townsmen. In the mid-eighteenth century the family names of Wickes, Howland, Place, Wightman, Reynolds, Mumford, Brown, Payne, Mowry, and Kenyon, appeared in records, as they came from nearby towns to make East Greenwich their home.



WINDMILL COTTAGE — 1818

## CHAPTER XXIII    📖   📖   📖   📖

### *Characters and Legends of East Greenwich*

The expression “a character” has been misused in recent years. It has become synonymous with “crackpot” and similar uncomplimentary appellations. The characters written about here deserve no such label, so for the sake of accuracy we will call them “individualists”. Webster defines an individualist as “one who acts or thinks independently or with individuality”, a definition that fits our characters in East Greenwich.

The taciturnity of the New England Yankee has long been appreciated. Our own classic example of pithiness comes from the Tibbitts family. It seems that young Whitman Tibbitts left his father’s farm in Frenchtown one morning to drive a wagonload of vegetables to the village. Leaving the wagon in town, young Tibbitts took himself off and never a word was heard from him for two years. At the end of that time his sister, Sarah, looked out one morning and there on the chop-

ping block sat brother Whitman, as big as life and twice as handsome.

"Pa", she cried, "there's Whitman out there a-setting in the yard".

Old Henry came to the door, peered out at his long-lost son and said: "Whitman, come in and git your breakfast". And that was that!

Then there was Aunt Betsy Simmons who established her own tradition. She was a wonderful cook and lived on King Street with her nephew, Simmons Spencer. She was especially famed for her fruit cakes which she baked each year at Christmas. They were replete with pounds of raisins and citron and were mixed with a barrel of flour in an enormous utensil "as big over the top as a hog's-head it was". The ingredients would then be placed in large bowls, middle-sized bowls, and small bowls and set to rise before the open fire. The next day they would be worked down again and, once more, put to rise. After the process had been repeated a number of times, the cakes finally reached the brick oven where they were baked to a turn. Tradition has it that many an East Greenwich swain took his sweetheart to Aunt Betsy's during the Christmas season to have a slice of the luscious cake, perhaps hoping that she might learn Aunt Betsy's secret recipe. Betsy would never divulge her secret but after her death it was found on a faded bit of paper and is still held by members of her family. So, if you are invited to partake of a slice of fruit cake in East Greenwich at Christmas-tide, you might inquire as to where the recipe originated — it may be Aunt Betsy Simmons'!

Another industrious, but much younger lady, was Miss Lydia Arnold, daughter of tavern keeper William Arnold, who was born here in 1769. In 1789, in a spinning bee held at the Court House, a group of forty-eight ladies with their own wheels, their own flax and for their own use, spun 173 skeins of linen yarn. They worked from sunrise to sunset in celebration of the adoption of the Federal Constitution and to encourage manufacturing in Rhode Island. Miss Lydia, at

twenty years of age, spun seven skeins and one knot and came out the winner in this demonstration of loyalty and industry.

As colorful as any character hereabouts was the mysterious wife of the tavern-keeper, John Tibbitts. Her maiden name was Susannah Place, but the Place family here find no girl of that name listed in their genealogy. But here she was and no mistake. She was described thusly by a contemporary: "She was a large woman with snappy, black eyes and a dark complexion. She generally wore a blue and white Indian gingham dress made full skirted, so as to go around her ample waist. She wore a little plaid shawl around her shoulders with the ends crossed over her large bosom and tucked into the belt. Her cap was a white frilled one and it was of necessity that a large blue handkerchief was used frequent and often, as she was a great taker of snuff. Her costume was completed by a string of gold beads around her neck and large gold earrings".

Susannah ran the tavern most efficiently, both while her husband lived and after his death. She was a genial hostess and an excellent business woman.. At the death of John Tibbitts, in 1813, Susannah called on Captain Peleg Congdon for legal advice. She got the advice and the Captain as well, for they were married soon after. In a few months the marriage ended in divorce. Then she married Job Manchester and left the tavern to live in his house on Marlborough Street. She loved flowers and had an old-fashioned garden with hollyhocks, larkspur, sweet mignonette, and everlastings, all growing in abundance. Woe to the youngster who tried to take a short-cut through her yard!

Susannah Place Tibbitts-Congdon-Manchester was an extraordinary character. Who was she? Where did she come from? Who knows?

In connection with the Tibbitts Tavern, there is another story which has come down to us. On a sultry night in the summer of 1872, the tavern was struck by lightning. Little Jimmy Fones, who ran the tavern then, rushed up and down Main Street in his night-shirt crying: "Fire, fire!" Men ran hither and thither toward neighboring well, as there was no



town supply of water. A bucket brigade was formed from the town pump in front of the Court House and men sat a-stride ridge poles of nearby houses dousing the roofs with buckets of water.

One man, racing down dark Division Street, bumped into something which sent him sprawling. He lit a match and found he had run into a cow. Hannah Greene lost her voice trying to holler, "Fire, fire!" Sheffield Arnold, who ran a jewelry shop, moved his stock up under the wall in his back yard and, in his excitement, put his pants on hind side before. He vowed ever after that he didn't know whether he was coming or going!

It was a tragic night, nonetheless, and amid the few pieces of furniture saved from the tavern and carried to Court House Lane was poor Jimmy Fones, sitting in a rocking-chair and crying like a baby. He has lost his home as well as his livelihood and was much grieved.

The barn caught fire, too, and a dozen or more horses were burned to death. The lovely trees before the tavern were killed by the heat and hung in black despair. A night to remember in East Greenwich—the night the tavern burned.

Our legendary "man of distinction" was Ethan Clarke. A solid citizen of the community, a merchant and banker. Ethan was born in Hopkinton in 1745. He served in the Revolutionary War as a Captain in the First Rhode Island Regiment. Later, he came here and bought the Varnum House. He wore his Continental uniform until the day he died in 1833. He was a very public spirited man and was one of the founders of the Kent Academy. Following him everywhere, about three paces to the rear, was his faithful negro servant, Caesar. Caesar was an African slave who stood six feet, three inches tall.

When Ethan Clarke died he was buried on the Clarke lot on Rector Street and his slave, Caesar, at his death was buried cross-wise at the feet of his master. These bodies, along with others in the Clarke plot, were moved to the Greenwich Ceme-

tery in recent years. A mind-catching picture is that of Ethan Clarke, resplendent in his Continental uniform walking up and down the hills of Greenwich, followed by his huge negro slave.

A rather amusing incident took place during the Revolutionary War and is worth re-telling. One of our captains, a small, dark Frenchman named Gazee, fitted out a fifty ton schooner as a privateer and named it "Felicity". With this boat he surprised and captured a large English ship with a valuable cargo of dry-goods, brought her into the harbor, and anchored her in the upper end of the cove. The English captain was so mortified that he actually wept and said that if he had been captured by a respectable force he could bear it with fortitude, but to be captured by "a damned old squaw in a hog trough" was more than he could endure!

No town is complete without a ghost and East Greenwich has a few. Perhaps the most famous is the ghost of Middle Road who, on each Hallowe'en, roams the roads of Frenchtown pleading with each passerby to take the nail out of his neck!

It seems there were dark doings at Jim Andrews' Tavern, just off Middle Road. Jim was manufacturing his own paper money and it was being distributed by a pedlar. The pedlar came to the tavern one winter's night and told Jim that the law was on his trail. Jim realized that if they found the pedlar, his goose was cooked as well. So he plied his partner with liquor and, when he had gone up to bed, Jim followed him. He opened the bedroom door and, going up to the unconscious man, quickly drove a nail into the base of his skull. That did it!

Jim took him over his shoulder and carried him to the swamp where he dumped him most unceremoniously. Later, when the Andrews boys chased a stray cow in the vicinity of the swamp, Jim decided to move the body. One night in January, his wife heard him digging in the hard, frozen earth beneath the bargain. There he buried, for the second time, the poor pedlar with his pack. It is from this unmarked grave that he comes back to haunt us.

Louis Fry and his mother were returning home from a visit to Shippeetown one winter's night in the 1890's. Fresh snow was on the ground and, up ahead, Mrs. Fry saw a figure standing. Thinking it was her husband come to meet them, she hurried forward, only to find the spot vacant and no foot-prints in the snow. An optical illusion? Perhaps, but maybe it was our poor old pedlar still treading Middle Road with the nail in his skull. At that, I would rather meet up with him, than with this traitorous partner, Jim Andrews!

In the East Greenwich town records, dated August 9, 1698, there is the following statement: "Charles Hazelton, Senior, took Hannah Matteson to wife according to custome in her Shift and no other clothing Before Jane Sweet and Elizabeth Heath. And were lawfully married the same day By mee John Heath, Conservator". Hannah (Parsons) Matteson was the widow of Henry Matteson and had six children. According to old English law, if a woman at her second marriage wore only her shift, her new husband would not be accountable for her first husband's debts. In England the custom was known as a "smock marriage" but here it was called a "shift marriage" and was, for obvious reasons, usually performed at night. The shift worn was very similar to what a woman's slip is today. This marriage, according to law, had to be performed at a "crossroads", interpreted here as a place where three towns meet. East Greenwich, at the time of the Hazelton-Matteson nuptials, had only one such site, which would be on the Post Road near Hunt's River, at the East Greenwich, Warwick, North Kingstown lines. But, from other records, it seems probable that the law was interpreted more freely and that a marriage might be performed at a crossroad leading to three different towns.

It is a cheering note that this particular marriage was in the month of August. The thought of a woman, thus thinly clad, standing at a crossroad getting married on a January night, is appalling. Many so-called "shift marriages" took place and were a common occurrence. It must have been an eerie sight to see that procession of bride and groom, witnesses,

clerk and friends all carrying torches for light, wending their way along the dark, lonely road to fulfill the letter of the law.

Another individualist of more recent vintage was John Bagley of Rocky Hollow Road. John had a real Irish sense of humor. He was famed for his unbelievable stories which he always finished off with the phrase "more or less", thus exonerating himself from any hint of fabrication.

John had a horse, named Napoleon, whose great speed he loved to brag about. John said he had to go to Frenchtown, one fine day, to buy a pig. He placed the pig in the back of his carryall and started for home. A big, black cloud came into the sky and rain seemed sure. John whipped up his horse and really skimmed down the road to Greenwich. When he arrived, the pig in the back of the carryall was drowned but his horse, Napoleon, had nary a drop of water on him—more or less!

In his late years John ran a small ice cream emporium on the corner of Rocky Hollow Road and Marlborough Street. There he held sway with his tall tales that did no one any harm and livened up the "cracker-barrel gang." His imagination was startling and among his ancestors may have been one of the Irish story-tellers who wove such wondrous tales.

In this period, too, some will remember Julia Capron, with her straw bonnet tied with gay ribbon, her bright blue eyes, red cheeks, snow-white hair, and her odd ways. She was the widow of James Capron, whom she married when she was 21 and he was 71. He was the local undertaker and for years after his death she ran an advertisement among the personal items in the *R. I. Pendulum* which read: "Graves Dug. Julia Capron". She did, too!

Our perennial tramp was Eddie Austin, who graced the town in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Eddie went from house to house, doing chores for a hand-out and a place to sleep. He was a scare-crow like figure, who was always in need of a bath.



One kind lady, whose husband had recently died, gave Eddie a fine winter overcoat, saying, "It will probably be too long for you, Eddie".

"That's O.K.", said our resourceful tramp. He promptly took it out to the chopping block and hacked a foot off the bottom of the good coat.

Eddie was strictly a local product. He never traveled far from the confines of the town and was our own knight of the road.

We have had several town misers. Among them was Miss Jennie Cook, who was born here in 1867, the daughter of Thomas and Abbie Cook. Their home was the old Hugh Bailey place in Tillinghast Road, now owned and so beautifully restored by Frederick G. Tanner.

Jennie, prior to her death in 1935, lived alone. She lived very frugally. Local tradesmen who delivered milk and bread in that area often took food to her, as they hated to see her in want. Neighbors rather suspected that Jennie might be a hoarder but carried food to her, just in case they were wrong. When Jennie died, the administrator of her estate, William Tillinghast, found money in every conceivable hiding place. Neither she, nor her father, had any faith in banks. Much of the money found was in old large-sized bills, which had been withdrawn from circulation some years before. Thousands of dollars had been hidden. Jennie might have lived a more comfortable life, if her evaluation of money had been more normal.

These were a few of our individualists. There were, of course, many more. We had them in high places and in low places, from the town banker, Ethan Clarke, to Julia Capron, the lady grave digger. They were characters, for the most part, in the very best sense of the word. They certainly added life and color to the history of this community.

The span of history, between 1677 and 1960, naturally encompasses many changes in the town, in population growth, in ethnical integration, in cultural, religious and educational development, as well as in physical appearance. The town of

East Greenwich is proud of its history and of its progress, both of which have been accomplished by individuals, sometimes working alone, but more often in civic-minded groups.

The East Greenwich-ite is town-proud. He reserves the privilege of sounding off on its shortcomings and woe to the stranger who voices the same sentiment! He has to be shown that you are what you claim to be, but once convinced, he will not be shaken in his loyalty. Snap judgments are mistrusted, and every municipal move is carefully studied before a decision is made, a habit which annoys newcomers to the point of exasperation. The timelessness of such an old town rubs off on its inhabitants.

To earn the status of an East Greenwich-ite, you must have lived here at least thirty-five years—otherwise you are classified as “new people”. The East Greenwich native, however far away his work or his obligations may take him, is deeply rooted here and the pull to return is strong.

All of this history, and much of the feeling it has tried to convey, is aptly expressed in a poem by Rose Koralewsky, who knows and loves this area so well. She calls it “The New England Heritage”:

“Here was I born: these things are in my blood.  
Often there overwhelms me like a flood  
A love for all that marks this crabbed land,  
Its dear perversities, its moods unplanned.  
Long bitter winters and a shy, slow spring  
That sweeter seems than any earthly thing;  
Lilacs and goldenrod and gray stone walls,  
Great elms where joyfully the robin calls;  
Far azure hills surging against the sky,  
And rugged strands where seething breakers die;  
Old gambrelled houses, lanes where ghosts have strayed,  
Low lichened headstones in a tall pine’s shade—  
These outward symbols almost I adore;  
The inner heritage I cherish more:  
For I have learned, the hollyhocks will glow  
Redder because of February’s snow”.

THE END

# Appendices

## LIST OF THOSE SERVING IN THE WAR OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION FROM EAST GREENWICH AND VICINITY AS FAR AS IS KNOWN.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Service</i>
Allen, Hon. John	Recruiting Officer	Judge
Arnold, Thomas	Captain	1st. R.I. Regiment, 1776-77
Barton, Benjamin	Private	
Barton, Rufus	Lieutenant	Col. Crary's Reg. 1776
Barton, Stukely	Private	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.*
Boyd, Andrew	Sergeant	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Brown, Charles	Private	
Brown, Clark	Captain	1st R.I. Reg.; 9th Cont. Infantry, 1776-77
Brown, John	Unknown	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Brown, Nathaniel	Colonel	2nd R.I. Reg. 1776
Burlingame, Chandler	Lieutenant	Paymaster, 1st R.I.; 9th Cont. Infantry
Campbell, Jacob	Private	R.I.M. 1777-85
Capron, Greene	Sergeant	Col. Crary's Reg. 1775
Card, Joseph	Unknown	Waterman's Pa. Militia
Carpenter, John	Musician	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Clarke, Ethan	Captain	1st R.I. Reg. 1775
Comstock, Adam	Lt. Colonel	1st R.I. Reg. 1776-78
Cornell, Joseph	Ensign	1st R.I. Reg. 1777-79
Cook, John	Lieutenant	1st R.I. Reg. 1777-78
Crary, Archibald	Colonel	2nd R.I. & 9th Cont. Infantry, 1775-1783
Davis, William	2nd Lieut.	1st R.I. 1777
Dexter, John Singer	Major	1st R.I. Reg. & 9th Cont. Inf. 1778. Col. Olney's Battalion, 1781-83
Flagg, Ebenezer	Major	1st R.I. Reg. & 9th Cont. Inf. 1775-81. Killed in action.
Fry, Benjamin	Captain	4th R.I., 1775-1776
Fry, Joseph	Major	Kentish Guards, R.I.M. 1775-76
Fry, Richard	Colonel	Kentish Guards, R.I.M. 1775-76
Gardiner, Oliver	Capt. U. S. Navy	Row-Galley, Washington
Glazier, John	Captain	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Greene, Griffin	Major	1st R.I. Reg. 1777-78
Greene, Job	Lieutenant	Stanton's R.I. Reg. 1776-77
Greene, Joseph	Sergeant	Kentish Guards, R.I.M. 1775-76
Greene, Nathanael	Major-General	Brig. Gen. 1775-76; Maj. Gen. 1776-82; Quartermstr-Gen. 1778-80
Greene, Hon. Ray	Atty.-Gen. of R. I.	U.S. Senator. U.S. Dist. Atty.
Greene, William	War Governor of R. I.	Member of the Council of Safety

\*Rhode Island Militia.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Service</i>
Greene, Wm. (brother of Nathanael)	Private	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Hall, William	Ensign	Capt. Johnson's Militia, 1776
Hill, Caleb	Lieutenant	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Hill, Caleb, Jr.	Musician, Pvt.	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Hill, Stukely	Ensign	Kentish Guards, R.I.M. 1775-81
Holden, Chas.	Paymaster	1st R.I. Reg. 1777-78
Holden, Thos.	Major-General	1st R.I. Reg. 1775
Howland, Daniel	Chaplain	Quaker
Jerauld, Dutee	Captain	1st R.I. Reg. 1781; 9th Cont. Reg. 1776-1780
Johnson, Allen	Captain	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Johnson, Edmund	Captain	1st R.I. Reg.
Joslyn, Joseph	Surgeon	9th Cont. Infantry, 1776
Miller, James	Captain	Col. Chris. Greene's Reg.
Miller, Nathan	Captain	Kentish Guards, Col. Fry's Reg.
Mumford, Augustus	Major	Adj. 1st R.I. Reg. Killed at Plowed Hill, 1775
Nichols, Chris.	Private	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Parrish, John	Surgeon's Mate	1st R.I. Reg. 1777-80
Pearce, Edward	Sergeant	Kentish Guards, R.I.M. Lost arm when field piece exploded in Warwick, 1778
Pearce, Daniel	Lieutenant	1st R.I. 1777; 9th Cont. Inf. 1777-79
Pearce, Job	Major	Col. Elliott's Reg. 1776-77
Place, Philip	Private	Kentish Guards, R.I.M. 1775-1779
Place, Jeremiah	Private	Kentish Guards, R.I.M. 1775-1779
Reynolds, John	Lieutenant	Kentish Guards, R.I.M. 1775
Shippee, Anthony	Corporal	Col. Crary's Reg.
Shippee, Caleb	Private	Capt. Michael Spencer's Company, 1777-80
Shippee, John		
Spencer, Anthony	Private	Col. Crary's Reg. 1778-81
Spencer, Benjamin	Private	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Spencer, Ebenezer	Major	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Spencer, John	Private	Kentish Guards, R.I.M. 1776
Spencer Michael	Private	Col. Elliott's Reg. 1776
Sprague, John	Captain	Unknown
Stafford, James	Private	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Sweet, James	Private	Kentish Guards, R.I.M. 1776
Tarbox, Samuel	Private	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Tibbitts, Benjamin	Private	Col. Lippitt's Reg. 1775-76
Tillinghast, Thos.	Colonel	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Turner, Peter	Surgeon	1st R.I. Reg. 1777-81
Varnum, James M.	Major-General	Col. 1775-76; Brig.-Gen. & Maj. Gen. R.I.M. 1779
Vaughn, Job	Captain	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Vaughn, Robert	Private	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.



<i>Name</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Service</i>
Waterman, Wm.	Captain	Quartermaster, 1779; Capt. Cavalry, 1783
Weaver, Benjamin	Sergeant	1776
Weaver, Christopher	Ensign	1777-79
Weaver, Dutee	Private	Kentish Guards, 1776-78
Whitmarsh, Joseph	Lieutenant	1st R.I. & 9th Cont. 1776-78
Whitmarsh, Micah	Colonel	Varnum's Brigade, 1775-78
Wickes, Oliver	Sergeant	Kentish Guards, R.I.M.
Wightman, George	Private	Col. Crary's Reg. 1778-79

## TOWN CLERKS IN EAST GREENWICH—1677-1957

<i>Name</i>	<i>Term</i>
John Spencer .....	1677-1682
John Heath .....	1682-1713
Thomas Spencer .....	1713-1751
Giles Peirce .....	1751-1763
John Spencer (of Wm.) .....	1763-1766
Benjamin Spencer .....	1766-1769
Hopkins Cooke .....	1769-1807
Allen Tillinghast .....	1807-1808
James Miller .....	1808-1835
Jeremiah Slocum .....	1835-1836
Nathan Whiting .....	1836-1839
Thomas Tilley .....	1839-1839
William Sheldon .....	1839-1849
Silas Weaver .....	1849-1866
Samuel D. Johnson.....	1866-1867
J. C. Ellis.....	1867-1868
Edward Stanhope .....	1868-1893
George A. Loomis.....	1893-1943
Helen C. Anderson.....	1943

The following lines were composed about 1849. The writing has been attributed to two different persons. The *R. I. Pendulum* of 1881 says it was written by a local milliner; a reprint of the same poem in 1899 attributes it to a Miss Goff, a student at the East Greenwich Academy. Although leaving much to be desired as far as poetry is concerned, it does give some rather interesting sidelights on the town at that period.

In the 1899 publication, a key was given for some of the inferences and these are noted at the end of the poem.

AN OFFERING TO THE GREENWICH PEOPLE  
OR  
EAST GREENWICH IN 1849

- Stanza* 1—In our darling little Greenwich,  
On Rhode Island's eastern border,  
Is where the people all unite  
To keep the best of order.
- Stanza* 2—The scenery from the Academy  
Is what everyone admires,  
Still better from the Boarding House  
As that is somewhat higher.
- Stanza* 3—North, south and west presents a view,  
That has a thousand charms  
Of rocks and hills, and brooks and vales  
And cultivated farms.
- Stanza* 4—And when you take an eastern view,  
There's Narragansett Bay,  
Where schooners, sloops and little boats  
Upon its waters play.
- Stanza* 5—There many a boat is kept for sport,  
If any of us wishes  
To prove the bosom of the bay,  
Is stored with best of fishes.
- Stanza* 6—I have given a superficial view  
Of what the eye first meets;  
And now I will describe the scene  
Along the busy streets.
- Stanza* 7—Here grocery stores are not a few,  
There's one for each Society;  
And Deacon Brown has long been known,  
To keep the best variety.
- Stanza* 8—J. Johnson and Co., and Tilley and Son,  
Should be well patronized too,  
They trade so fair and never dun,  
Until they are obliged to.

*Stanza 9*—At Kit Johnson's Store, if we should need,  
There's Rum, and Gin, and Brandy,  
But as that is against our creed,  
We'll spend our change on candy.

*Stanza 10*—Tillinghast, Roberts, and Slocum,  
They are our Dry Goods traders;  
Also, G. Allen and Mrs. Bardine,  
A few transient invaders.

*Stanza 11*—There are two milliners on this street,  
Where Bonnets are made and repaired;  
They wait forever for their pay,  
And longer if required.

*Stanza 12*—The Updikes keep a genteel house,  
Of ancient and honorable name;  
They do much credit to this town,  
And merit our highest esteem.

*Stanza 13*—The Court House is a splendid trump,  
A little from the street,  
With the patch-work woman at the pump.  
It makes the scene complete.

*Stanza 14*—And the old Jail upon the wharf,  
Will open wide its Jaws,  
To shut up all, both great and small,  
Who trample on our laws.

*Stanza 15*—Fruits, Oysters, and the nicest Cake,  
If any of us wishes  
Can be obtained at any hour  
By stepping in at Fish's.

*Stanza 16*—If you're in want of Boots or Shoes,  
When you a shopping go;  
Just make a call, on Albert Hall,  
He sells them very low.

*Stanza 17*—We have three Factories in this town,  
Two work Cotton, and one Wool,  
With a Tarriff so low, they hardly dare go;  
They're afraid of old "John Bull".

- Stanza 18*—Ben Cozzens lately has got rich,  
He'll put the others on the track  
To fail, and never pay their help,  
And keep one Hundred Thousand back.
- Stanza 19*—There are so many schools, and so many rules,  
And so many first rate teachers;  
Should I mention half, it would make you laugh,  
So I will pass on to the preachers.
- Stanza 20*—Of Mr. Crane, I do not complain,  
Although the Church don't grow;  
Most of the good, are of one "Blood",  
I can't say why 'tis so.
- Stanza 21*—And Mr. Cone, it is well known,  
Has piety, and talents,  
And Samuel Brown, of some renown,  
Would prove an equal balance.
- Stanza 22*—Of the Baptists too, I must take a view,  
Their dedication is near;  
There Mr. Wheeler is a first rate preacher,  
I wish them a Happy New Year.
- Stanza 23*—The Quakers, I must not leave out,  
So pleasant, plain and sainted;  
They're a sect I know but little about,  
But mean to get acquainted.
- Stanza 24*—As good health is my lot, I almost forgot  
Our four Doctors, the best ever seen,  
Eldredge and Wheeler well known, and a King  
without a Throne;  
The Other, will own himself Greene.
- Stanza 25*—There are some who feel, they are genteel,  
Of ancestral renown;  
Green turnip tops are little worth,  
When the root is under ground.
- Stanza 26*—'Tis rather queer, there's others here  
Who need a hint at least,  
Who early walk and early call,  
To show they're up and dressed.



*Stanza 27*—There's no one likes to be surprised,  
Before they wash or comb;  
I hope they'll hear to this advice,  
Until eight, to stay at home.

*Stanza 28*—Religion seems to be their pride,  
Whene'er they spend a social hour;  
In trade, they lay it all aside,  
And cheat you if 'tis in their power.

*Stanza 29*—So much religion in this town,  
But no Christianity can I see;  
They shove and crowd each other down,  
They'll make an infidel of me.

*Stanza 30*—Should this dull scroll not meet the taste  
Of Scholars, teachers and president;  
Remember 'twas dashed off in haste,  
By a very home-sick resident.

## KEY TO EAST GREENWICH IN 1849.

Additions have been added to the old key which appeared in the *R. I. Pendulum* of 1899. What has been taken from the old key is in quotes.

*Stanza 7*—"Deacon Brown was Roland or Cracker Brown, who had a small grocery store for a short time and kept candy and small beer".

*Stanza 8*—"John Johnson kept livery in a low one story building north of the Uplike House, at that time a shay house for the hotel. Tilley and Son kept a similar place near there."

*Stanza 9*—Christopher Johnson kept the Tibbitts Tavern for a short time and had a small store in the building.

*Stanza 10*—Judge Joseph Tillinghast, "an aged gentleman", kept groceries in the basement of the house on the corner of Division and Main Streets. J. P. Roberts kept dry-goods store across from Metho-

dist Church and "Eben'r Slocum, as his sign used to read" had gent's furnishings in a Main Street store on the east side of the block between Queen and Long Streets. "George Allen had a small grocery store on Main Street and old Mrs. Bardine (Bardeane) kept half a dozen pieces of calico and a few toys nearly opposite the Methodist Church, and was an auxiliary to J. P. Roberts to whom she was some way connected, and it was rumored that through her he got his property".

*Stanza 11*—"The two milliners were Mrs. Eddy and Mrs. Tillinghast, two rivals in business."

*Stanza 13*—"The patch work women were named Holden, sisters to W. A. Holden at Natick. They were very old and eccentric. There were two of them and they patched their dresses to all appearances, forever. They were some of the first settlers and occupied the house their father built where Odd Fellows Hall now stands. It was about 12 x 20 square and 6 feet high. Their garments were frequently stolen by the curious as relics but were generally replaced by better ones.

*Stanza 15*—"Charley Fish opposite the Kent House (where Mary Ann's is now) a favorite with the academy girls and fellows too. It made a grand place to meet at any hour."

*Stanza 16*—"Albert Hall, a batchelor, kept boots and shoes in the Arcade, but seldom had more than one number on hand at a time. It was a ruse with the girls to go and inquire for what he had not got as he was very clever and affable with the ladies."

*Stanza 18*—Benjamin Cozzens took over the Union Mill in 1840 and induced people in town to invest in his venture, which failed.

*Stanza 20*—Elder Crane was the Episcopal minister at St. Luke's. Elder Blood was the Methodist minister.

*Stanza 21* Elder Cone and Elder Wheeler were resident Baptist preachers. The Baptist Church on Peirce Street was new in 1849.

"Samuel Brown, a racked brain law student that thought he could preach."

*Stanza 23*—This refers to Dr. James H. Eldredge, Dr. Lucius Wheeler and Dr. Daniel Greene. "Dr. Absalom King resided in Apponaug and was thought to be stepping out of his town to practice in East Greenwich".

*Stanzas 24,*

25, 26, These are evidently personal observations and are and 27—meaningless after one hundred years.

*Stanza 30*—"The Academy at this date was under the management of a president and trustees instead of a principal".

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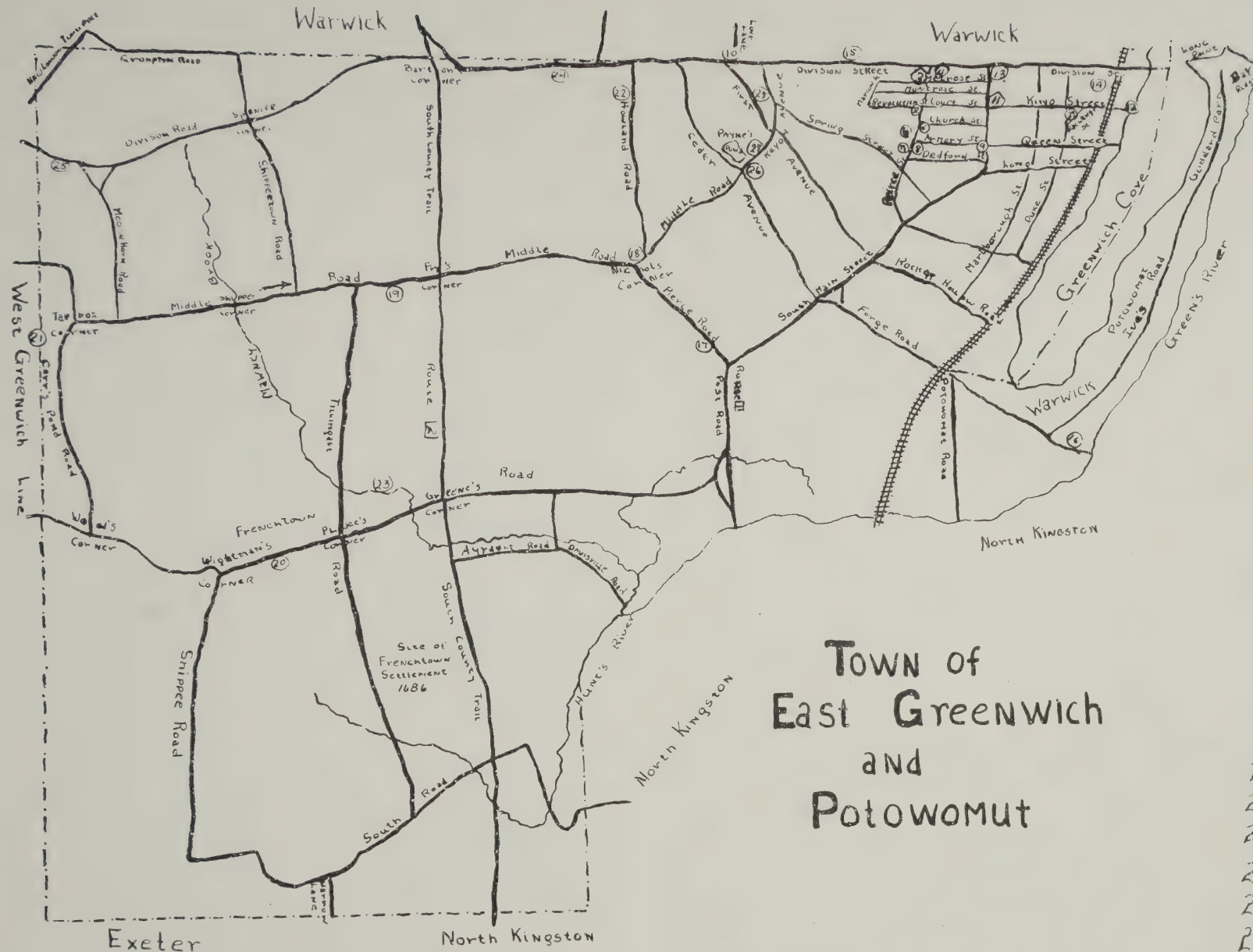
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Quaker Meeting House (site)  
Kentish Guard Armory  
Stanhope House  
Gov. Wm. Greene Farm  
Tibbitts Tavern  
Kent County Jail  
Varnum Armory  
Old Baptist Burying Ground  
The Windmill Cottage  
Nathaniel Greene Birthplace  
Coggeshall House  
Lilac Cottage  
Brownbread Place  
Tibbitts House  
Tarbox-Whitford Cemetery  
Clement Weaver House  
Site of Tillinghast Cotton Mill  
White Horse Tavern  
Moosehorn Tavern  
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John Spencer's House (site)  
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2. Varnum House Museum
3. Dr. Eldredge House
4. Miller-Congdon House
5. East Greenwich Free Library
6. East Greenwich Academy (site)
7. Quaker Meeting House (site)
8. Kentish Guard Armory
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10. Gov. Wm. Greene Farm
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12. Kent County Jail
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24. White Horse Tavern
25. Moosehorn Tavern
26. Crossways Farm
27. John Spencer's House (site)
28. Dr. Thos Spencer House (site)
29. First School in E.G. (site)













